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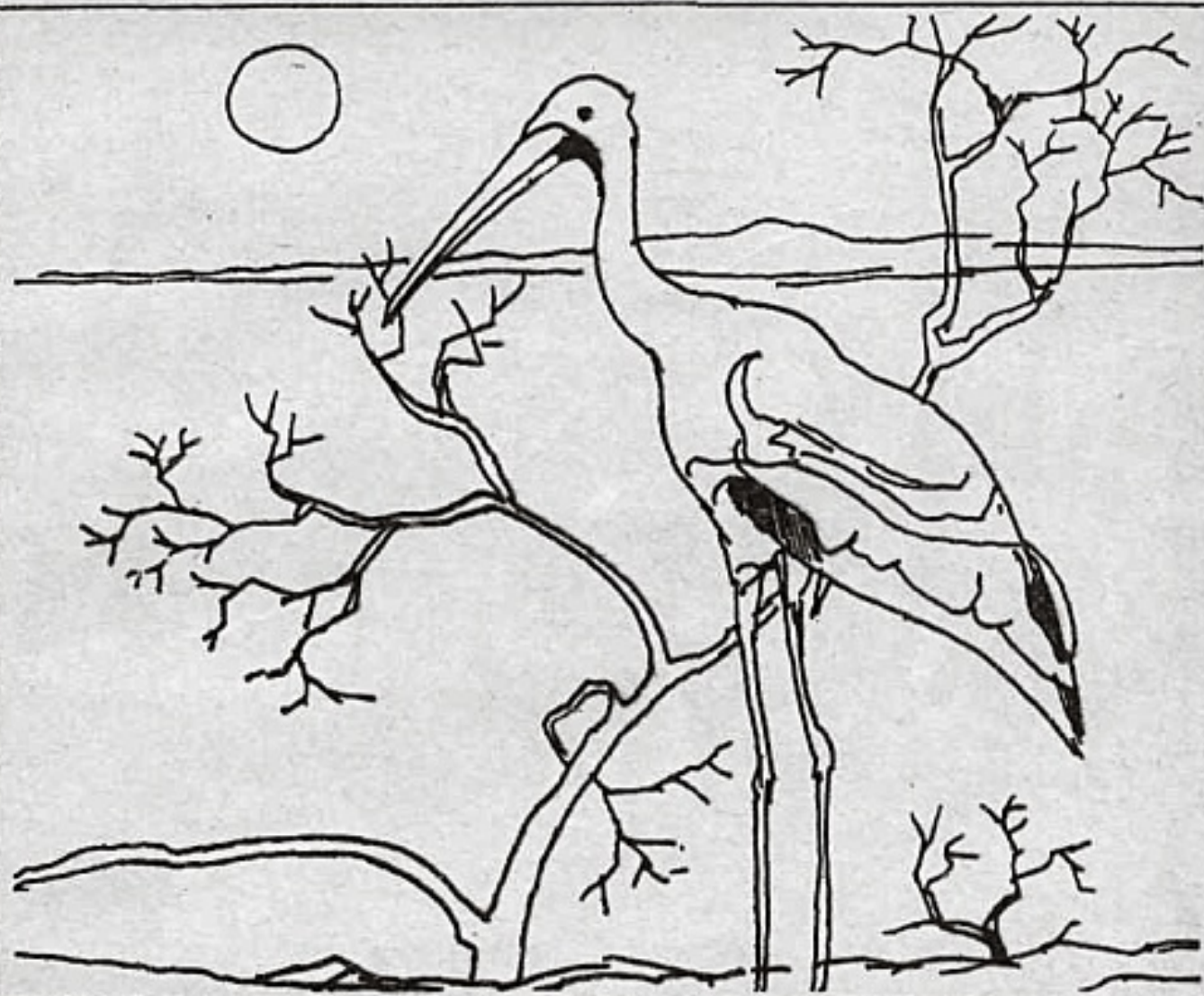
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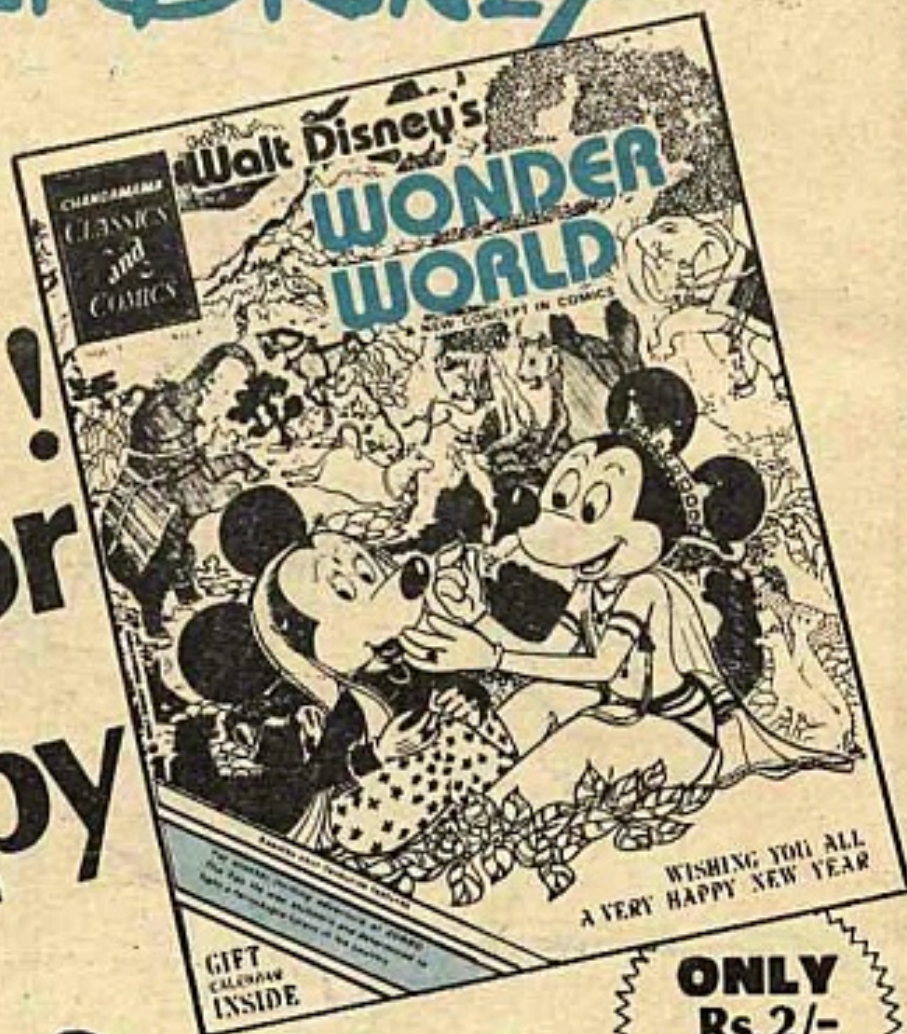
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PLUS SIX COMPLETE STORIES
AND SEVEN OTHER FEATURES

GOLDEN WORDS OF YOGE

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।

येनाक्रमन्त्येषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥

*Satyameva jayate nānṛtaṁ satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ
Yenākramantyrṣayo hyāptakāmā yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ
nidhānam*

Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. The divine path is paved with truth along which the sages march with contentment towards their destination — the ultimate Truth.

— The Mundaka Upanishad



Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

FROM CHANDAMAMA—WITH LOVE

We wish our readers and well-wishers a bright and creative New Year.

It was thirtythree years ago that a dream was given a practical shape: the **Chandamama** was born. Over the decades it has grown with several generations of young readers.

The **Chandamama's** price, in its early phase, was annas six a copy. Whenever it has enhanced its price, it has done so with great reluctance. If its price were to increase keeping pace with the fall in the rupee's worth, it ought to cost much more than its current price. All the other publications have revised their price upward accordingly. But the **Chandamama** would not like to follow suit. It continues to struggle against odds and keep its price down for the benefit of its darling readers, never ceasing to be dynamic in its content.

Moreover, banking on the love and support of the people, the **Chandamama** has launched a new adventure: it is embracing a new section of readers—the blind. If children of so many languages are enjoying their magazine, why those bereft of vision should be deprived of the joy? A new edition of the **Chandamama** will appear, once every quarter, beginning from this month. The text will be presented in the Braille—for reading through touch. Beginning in this International Year dedicated to the Disabled, this will be your magazine's contribution to their cause—free of any charge.

NEWS FLASH



Music from the Stone Age

Musical instruments that were played 20,000 years ago, including a Xylophone made of the bones of a mammoth, have been discovered by Russian archaeologists.

The Xylophone is in good shape, thanks to the quality of the mammoth's bones. Specialists have already recorded its sound—the sound that amused hearts that used to beat in a remote part.

Saturn's Baffling Rings

Way back in 1609 Galileo had accidentally discovered the Saturn's rings. The American space-ship, Voyager I, which has just photographed Saturn, has shown the rings to be more formidable and perhaps more in number than known earlier. It is believed that out of a similar ring around the sun the planets of the Solar System were born 4.6 billion years ago. Can the Saturn's rings give birth to new planets? One never knows.



In Search of the Lost City

In 1981 begins the search for a lost city, Pumpuhar. This city flourished at the mouth of the river Kaveri in Tamil Nadu.

Pumpuhar or Puhar or Kaveripattinam was the capital of the Chola Kings. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras visited it in the 6th century B.C.

If Pumpuhar has not been forgotten, it is mostly because of a great Tamil epic written about two thousand years ago, *Shilappadikaram* or "The Anklet", by Ilango Adigal. This is about a young merchant, Kovalan, who fell into bad days and along with his wife, Kannagi, left for Madurai, the capital of the Pandya Kings. There, attempting to sell an anklet of Kannagi, he was falsely accused of having stolen an anklet of the queen and was put to death. When



Kannagi learnt of this, she threw a terrible curse on the city. As a result the city was reduced to ashes.

Apart from the Cholas (from whom come the word Coromandel) and the Pandyas, South India was then ruled by a third dynasty, the Cheras (from whom come the word Kerala). Ilango Adigal or the Ascetic Prince was the younger brother of a Chera King.



Babur's Last Will

The content of the will drawn by Babur, the founder of the Moghul Dynasty, for his son, Humayun, has recently come to light. The will tells Humayun to remember that Hindusthan was the home of many faiths. Humayun ought to be respectful and impartial towards all of them and ought not to destroy or disturb any shrine of any religious order. The will is preserved in the State Museum of Madhya Pradesh at Bhopal.

THREE PRINCESSES

(In the underground castle of the giant Udayan discovered a spacious tunnel of golden hue that ended up in a cave. But on his way there, he was bitten by a serpent. In order to prevent the poison spreading all over the body, he cut off his left hand. In the cave dwelt the giant's terrible deity.)

17. End of The Ordeal

Udayan feared, that the smoke and flames would soon suffocate him to death. But, strangely indeed, as he stood up and stared at the deity, the smoke disappeared and the flames subsided. He could hear a rhythmic sound that inspired awe.

Udayan took a fearless step towards the deity. Courage and despair simultaneously welling up in his heart, he blurted out, "Look here, you deity of this hidden region, why do you let the giant commit horrible crimes? What satisfaction do you derive from them? Why should he harass us when we had done no harm to him? Why? Why?"

Udayan's voice was choked. Looking at his left arm, he said again, suppressing a sob, "See how I had to lose an arm for reaching your hiding place. This is not all. We have suffered for years. Now, you must re-

veal to me where lies the secret of the giant's life. I've no more patience!"

No word came from the deity. But the live owl that sat on one of her hands screeched. In his despair Udayan struck the owl with his sword. It fell down into the fire below and disappeared. There was a dazzle of light. Udayan felt blinded. He kept his eyes shut for a moment.

Upon opening his eyes he found himself standing on a vast meadow. There was no castle, no lake, not even the forest!

Udayan did not know which way to go. Soon a glittering object attracted him. It was a round stone of ivory colour studded with jewels. A few yards from it he found two more similar objects. One was of silver colour; the third one was golden.

Before long a host of young

men and women came running to him. Among them were the guards of the giant.

Udayan could not decide what should be his attitude towards the giant-guards. But those guards almost mobbed him, crying out their happiness. "You have rescued us from our life-long slavery!" they repeated.

"What is this? What happened to your arm?" It was Kumar who expressed his shock. The giant-guards ran in different directions and soon returned with Udayan's lost arm as well as the ash that had been heaped before the disappeared deity. They joined the separated limb to the remaining part of Udayan's left arm. Making a paste of the ash, they applied it to the joint. In no time Udayan was able to move his arm as if he had received not even a scratch.

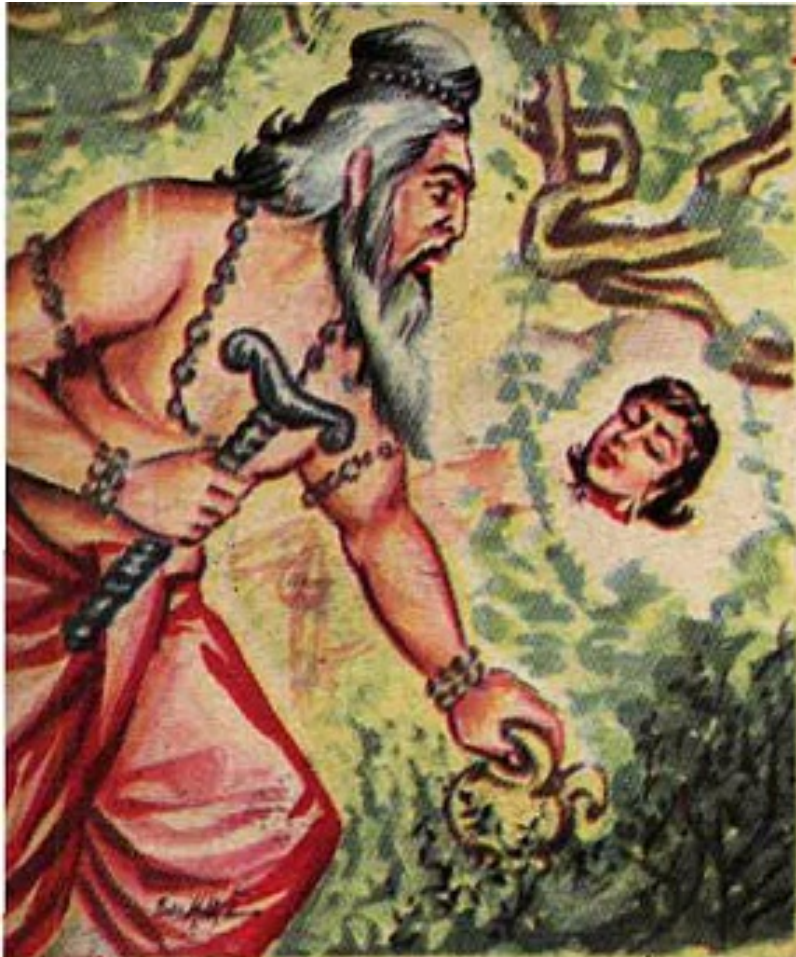
The kidnapped young men and women who had been obliged to remain in the lake as swans danced in joy. Even greater was the excitement of those whom the giant had changed into statues. They all understood that with Udayan striking the owl in the deity's hand, all the magic of the giant had vanished. They were not sure if the giant himself was



dead. But the guards of the giant assured them that even if the giant was alive he would have lost all his special power. His mere brute strength would be no match for their collective strength.

But all their joyous uproar could not bring much happiness to Udayan. Where were the princesses? Where was his brother Nishith? The wizard, his sincere well-wisher, too was missing. How can he rest without tracing them?

When the young men and women learnt of his anguish, they volunteered to go out in search of them. But Udayan



said, "You have just come out of a terrible curse. Your parents and relatives must be shedding tears over your unknown fate. Return to your homes forthwith. I shall see what luck has in store for me."

Udayan set out in search of the princesses and Nishith. He was accompanied by Kumar and a few princes who would not let their saviour go alone.

The party soon reached Virpratap's castle. Virpratap was not happy to see them. He somehow managed to smile and said, "Welcome, Udayan, but I know nothing of your brother or the princesses. If you so

desire, I can put some of my soldiers at your disposal."

"Thanks. I have a good number of friends to help me," said Udayan. They went out of Virpratap's small principality.

* * *

Nishith who had been out in search of his brother in the company of some soldiers provided to him by Virpratap, met his doom in the forest. The soldiers were assassins. They beheaded him and returned to their master.

But events moved fast. A hermit saw Nishith's body and head lying severed. He realised that the dead young man had fallen victim to some wicked conspiracy. He carried the dead body to his hut.

It so happened that the minister of the King of Shravasti, who was a disciple of the hermit, paid a visit to the latter. He recognised Nishith's dead body and was plunged in sorrow. The hermit applied some herbs to the body. That kept it free from decay. The minister arranged the body to be carried to Shravasti.

Nishith's body reached the palace just when Udayan and Kumar too had arrived there. The two brothers fainted at the

sight of their third brother's body. The condition of the king and the queen was no better. All in the palace wept. However, the mother of the three brothers was not told about Nishith's death.

It was then that the wizard arrived on the scene. He revived Udayan and Kumar. The two brothers felt partly consoled to see their friend.

The giant, assuming the form of a vulture, was flying over the sea holding the wizard in his claws. Suddenly he changed into his original form and came crashing down in the surging waves. Needless to say, it happened when Udayan, in the underground castle, struck the owl with his sword resulting in a total destruction of giant's all the magic powers.

The giant was drowned. But the wizard, being a good swimmer, managed to reach the shore.

From some fishermen he gathered that Shrivasti was not far. He found his way to the palace.

"Udayan, let us not lose heart. The giant, who was your formidable enemy, has been removed, thanks to your patience and perseverance. Why should we



not try with greater vigour to trace the princesses? Secondly, now that Nishith's body will remain fresh by the virtue of the hermit's herbs, we could revive him to life only if we could recover the magic powder. I feel almost sure that it is Virpratap who stole the powder from you," said the wizard.

The wizard's words put a new spirit into Udayan and Kumar. With a battalion of the king's army, they launched the new phase of their mission.

Straight they galloped forth into the principality of Virpratap. The town looked festive.

"What is the matter over



hind him.

Virpratap had not been able to see them because of the crowd and had not been able to hear their foot-steps because of the music. Now he stood pale and trembling.

"We vanquished a giant who had mastered great magic powers. You are a mere imp! Your small army would fall to our swords like blades of grass. How dare you try to deceive us? Get off the dais and come with us to the mighty King of Shravasti. You must apologise to him for trying to marry his daughters treacherously. But first surrender the magic powder you had stolen, or you die instantly!" shouted Udayan.

Virpratap, with bowed head, came down from the dais. He knelt down before Udayan and stammered out, "Please pardon me, noble young man, here is the powder, and please take the princesses away with you."

Udayan took the powder and then put Virpratap under arrest. Virpratap's bodyguards and courties exchanged whispers. But Udayan silenced them totally, saying, "Our army will destroy the palace if anyone tries to snatch the prisoner!"

They were soon back at

here?" the wizard asked some townsfolk.

"Why! Our king is marrying again—this time three charming sisters at a time!" reported the folk.

The wizard and the two brothers exchanged meaningful glances. They pushed their way into the decorated castle.

Lo, There in the courtyard, on the specially erected dais, sat Subhasini, Sukeshini, and Suhasini—weeping! Virpratap, dressed up as a bridegroom, was approaching them gleefully.

"Stop!" roared Udayan as he unsheathed his sword. His soldiers were dismounting be-

Shravasti. The first thing they did was to revive Nishith with the magic powder. Only then their mother was informed of their return. The whole kingdom broke into joyful hulla-baloo at the return of the princesses. With the giant's death, the princesses had got back their speech. They narrated their story to their charmed parents.

The three brothers were again and again congratulated—by the royalty, the ministers, the nobility, and the subjects. Soon the king proposed their marriage with the three princesses. It was a grand affair—the marriage of Udayan with Suhasini, of Kumar with Subhasini, and of Nishith with Sukeshini.

The wizard supervised the function most ably. The king

offered him the rulership of Virpratap's principality. But the wizard was like an ascetic. At his request Virpratap was set free.

Before leaving for the Himalaya to take up Yoga, the wizard told Udayan the secret of the three bejewelled stones he had collected. Udayan hurled the stones on to three hillocks. As they looked on, the stones exploded and out of them sprang up three magnificent castles—one of ivory colour, one of silver tinge and the third one of golden hue. The three brothers with their brides occupied them.

Thus all ended well with the adventures of the three brave boys in search of the three lost princesses.

The End



WORLD MYTHOLOGY - 8

THE ARGONAUTS

Prince Aeson of Iolcus left his little son Jason with a Centaur—a being with a human head and a horse's body.



This was because Jason's uncle, Pelius, plotted to kill him. Grown up, Jason met Pelius and claimed the throne to which he was the heir.



"Fetch the Golden Fleece from Colchis and the throne will be yours," said Pelius. Jason, in the company of some brave men, set out in a ship, Argo. They were called the Argonauts.



At the entrance to the Black Sea stood two terrible rocks. They rushed together on anything passing through them. Jason flew a bird. The rocks clamped on it. As they separated, the ship speedily crossed.





The King of Colchis put Jason to several tests. He passed them, thanks to the help of Princess Media, a magician, who loved him and whom he promised to marry.

Jason had to plough a field and sow a dragon's teeth. Innumerable dragons sprang up. At Media's advice, he threw a rock into them. They fought one another and all died.



The tree on which the Golden Fleece hung was guarded by a dragon that never slept. Media and Jason fed it with a medicated cake. It fell asleep. Jason took the Golden Fleece.

Both boarded the Argo and set sail. But Media's father pursued them. Media threw at the king's fleet a dummy of her brother. The king stopped to recover it. The Argonauts escaped.



TWO FRIENDS

Mangal and Kamal, two friends, put forth their dispute before the king. They had had a bet. Kamal complained that Mangal had agreed to pay him four hundred rupees if he lost the bet. About to lose it, he now says he will give only four rupees instead of four hundred.

Asked for an explanation, Mangal said, "My lord, when Kamal said that he will give two hundred rupees if he loses the bet, I said I will give four. I never said four hundred."

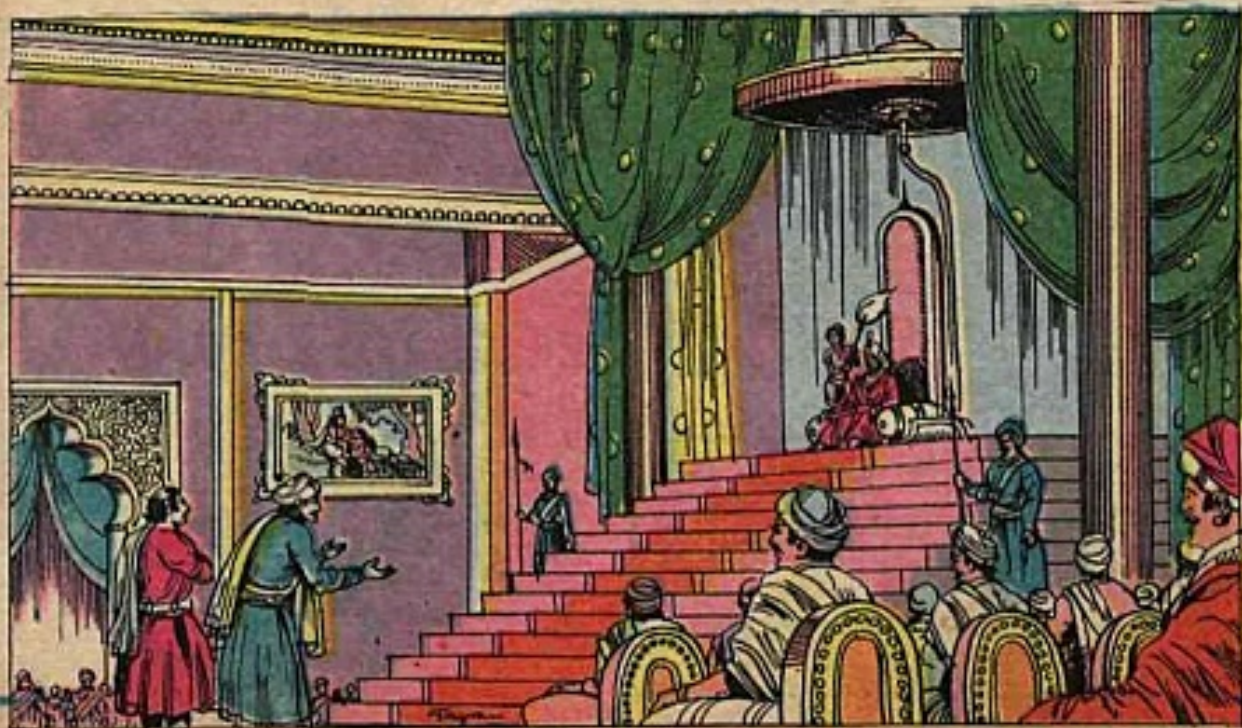
The king was much pleased with Mangal's cleverness. He gave Kamal four hundred rupees on behalf of Mangal and offered Mangal a job in his government.

The two friends appeared in the court again the next day. The problem now was, while the two friends were walking, Mangal found some money lying on the road. Since Mangal saw it first, he ought to have it. But he was compelling Kamal to accept half of the amount - complained Kamal.

The king was impressed by Kamal. How many people are there who would insist on refusing money? He gave a job to Kamal too.

"By the way, what was your bet yesterday?" asked the king.

They confessed: Mangal had said that he will find a job not only for himself, but also for Kamal!



The Thief and the Chief

Once the city of Kus, in upper Egypt, was plagued by a certain thief. However hard the Sultan exhorted his policemen to catch the culprit, they failed to do so.

The Police Chief rode from place to place in the city and thundered out his readiness to kill the thief when caught. "Let everybody know that there is nothing which I cannot sacrifice for the citizens. I can take any

risk for nabbing the thief. shall make it impossible for him to live. Wait and see," he would declare before a crowd and then move on to another place to boast in the same manner.

It was early in the night. The Chief had already retired to his house and was relaxing, leaving the work of finding out the thief to his sepoy. Someone knocked on his door. His



servant opened the door. In came a stranger carrying a large trunk on his head.

At the stranger's request the Chief asked the servant to leave the room.

"Who are you?" he asked the stranger.

"One totally scared of you," replied the fellow.

"Who is not scared of me? Tell me precisely who you are."

"I am the thief you are looking for," said the stranger.

The Chief straightened up. "I must capture you and lead you to the Sultan!" he roared.

"Sir, don't you see that I am already captured? I did it my-

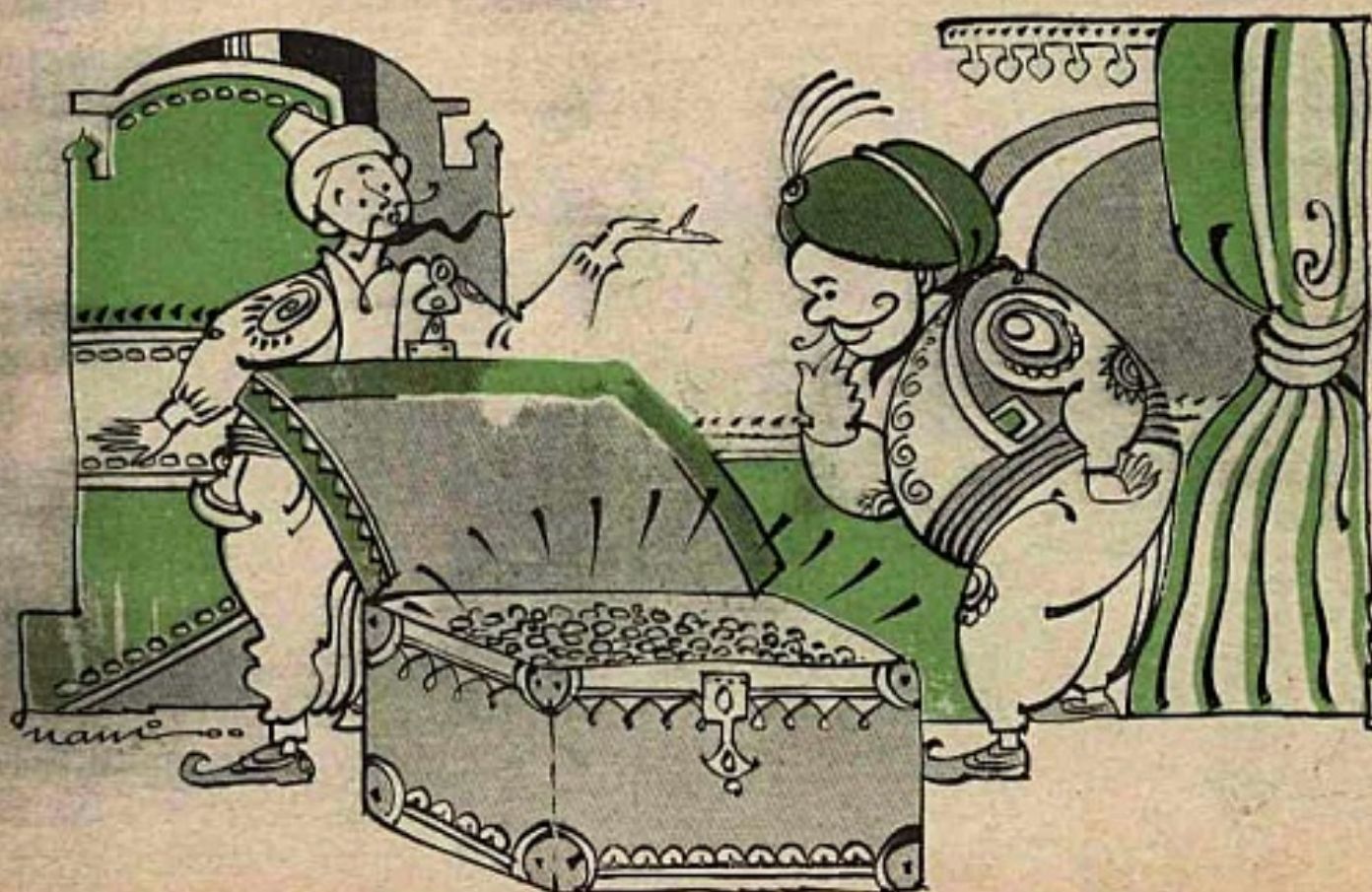
self to save you the botheration. Now remains the question of leading me to the Sultan."

"That is right. I'm going to do that forthwith," said the Chief as he stood up.

"In that case, this trunk ought to be carried to the Sultan too! What a pity!"

"Why pity?"

"This contains fifty thousand gold mohurs. Now that you have made it impossible for me to live in the town, I have decided to leave for some other land. I cannot carry this booty with me. I might be suspected or looted. All I want is a thousand silver coins to start



living elsewhere. Why not give me that much? You can keep this trunk for your personal use and let me slip away quietly."

The thief opened the lid of the box only slightly and shut it down again. The Chief had a glimpse of the dazzling gold inside.

His eyes bulging with joy and surprise, the Chief went over to his chest and brought out a thousand silver coins. Handing the amount over to the thief, he said imploringly, "For heaven's sake, leave the town instantly."

"I'll do so, good honest officer!" said the thief as he went out with the money.

The Chief restlessly walked

from wall to wall inside his room for a while and then put the trunk on his servant's head and marched to the nearest goldsmith's house.

"Would you mind melting these mohurs into a lump of gold?" he asked the goldsmith turning the trunk upside down on his floor.

The goldsmith took up a handful of the glittering stuff and examined them.

"I can melt these all right, but not into gold. These will make a nice lump of mixed metal, the lump won't fetch you more than one silver coin though—if at all!"

The Chief almost collapsed.



Shyam and Ram

Shyam never paid any heed to his mother's advice. He roamed about and spent his time either teasing some people or playing or gossiping with his pals.

One day he picked up a quarrel with a respectable man in the village street. He uttered some harsh words against the gentleman. A number of villagers gathered there. They thought that it was very impudent of Shyam to insult an elderly and respectable man. They took hold of him and were about to give him a beating. But Shyam's mother came running to the spot. She apologised to the gentleman and pleaded others with her sweet words. Shyam was let off.

"My son, how could you be so rude to the gentleman?" the mother asked Shyam.

"But, mother, it was he who misbehaved with me first!" replied Shyam.

"Even if that were so, you should have been tolerant," said the mother.

"What will happen if I am not tolerant?" asked Shyam.

"Nobody will love you. A

time might come when you can't even get food to eat," said the mother.

"Why, mother, won't you give me food if I quarrel with others?" asked Shyam innocently.

Tears drizzled in the mother's eyes. She took the boy into her arms and said, "My mad child, I won't be there to feed you forever. You have to depend on the world. You have to understand the ways of the world, if you expect the world to be kind to you."

Shyam kept quiet. His mother's words left a great impression on his mind.

He felt an urge to study more. He went over to a distant village and enrolled himself as a student of a learned scholar. The scholar taught him free. But he had to work for earning his daily food. If he worked in someone's garden for a couple of hours one day, he offered his assistance for cooking when there was a feast in someone else's house another day. All he got for his labour was a meal or two a day.

One day he got the news that

his mother had fallen sick. He ran to his village and was present at his mother's bedside when she was breathing her last. The villagers helped him to perform the last rites of his mother. Shyam thanked them and returned to his teacher.

In his teacher's village there was a boy of his age called Ram. He was as fickle-minded as he was arrogant. Moreover, he paid no attention to his studies.

"Shyam is of your age. But what a quiet boy he is! He works hard to maintain himself and he studies so well! I have never heard him uttering a rude word

to anybody," Ram's mother told the boy and sighed.

Ram had heard Shyam being praised by others too. Curious, he kept an eye on Shyam. One day he saw Shyam watering the plants in a gentleman's garden. The gentleman shouted at him, "Why do you pour so much water? Won't the roots of the plant rot?"

Next day Ram heard the gentleman's wife telling Shyam, "Look here, boy, pour a little more water; the plants would otherwise dry up!"

Shyam had said nothing to the gentleman; he said nothing to the gentleman's wife either!



Another time Shyam was holding the landlord's baby. "Don't hold the child always in your arms. Let him learn how to walk," observed the landlord. Shyam put the child on the ground. A few minutes later the landlord's wife saw the child toddling. "If the child has to walk, what for are you here?" she shouted at Shyam.

Ram observed that Shyam kept quiet.

At an opportune time Ram asked Shyam, "Brother, I hear people giving you all sorts of foolish commands. How do you manage to keep mum? Don't you feel like protesting?"

"I do not look upon their commands as anything foolish. They only speak from different points of view. What is important is not what they say, but what is in their heart. And

why should I answer back at all? Have I no reason to be grateful to them? They help me, after all!" said Shyam.

"But I cannot do without retorting if someone speaks harsh things to me!" said Ram.

Shyam said, "Well, my friend, I too used to do that, once. That was when my mother was there to protect me, support me and love me!"

Ram got a jolt. He realised what a source of strength one's mother is! He also realised that if his mother wanted him to change his behaviour, it is because she meant him good.

Ram felt a great change beginning to take place in himself. The two became friends. Shyam found an affectionate mother in Ram's mother. He lived in Ram's house till his study was over.





A Tale from the Panchatantra

In the holy city of Varanasi lived a washerman. He had a dog and a donkey to serve him.

The washerman took good care of both his servants, but as he grew prosperous he neglected his dog. So far as the donkey was concerned, he had of course to bestow good care on him, because on the service of the donkey depended the smooth running of his business.

One night while the washerman was asleep a petty burglar tried to enter his house. The dog saw him but did not bark.

"Hello, dog, why don't you bark? Don't you see the thief?" the donkey reminded the dog. The dog yawned, and instead of barking, said, "Tonight the house is almost empty. The master has delivered the clothes at the houses of his patrons. He

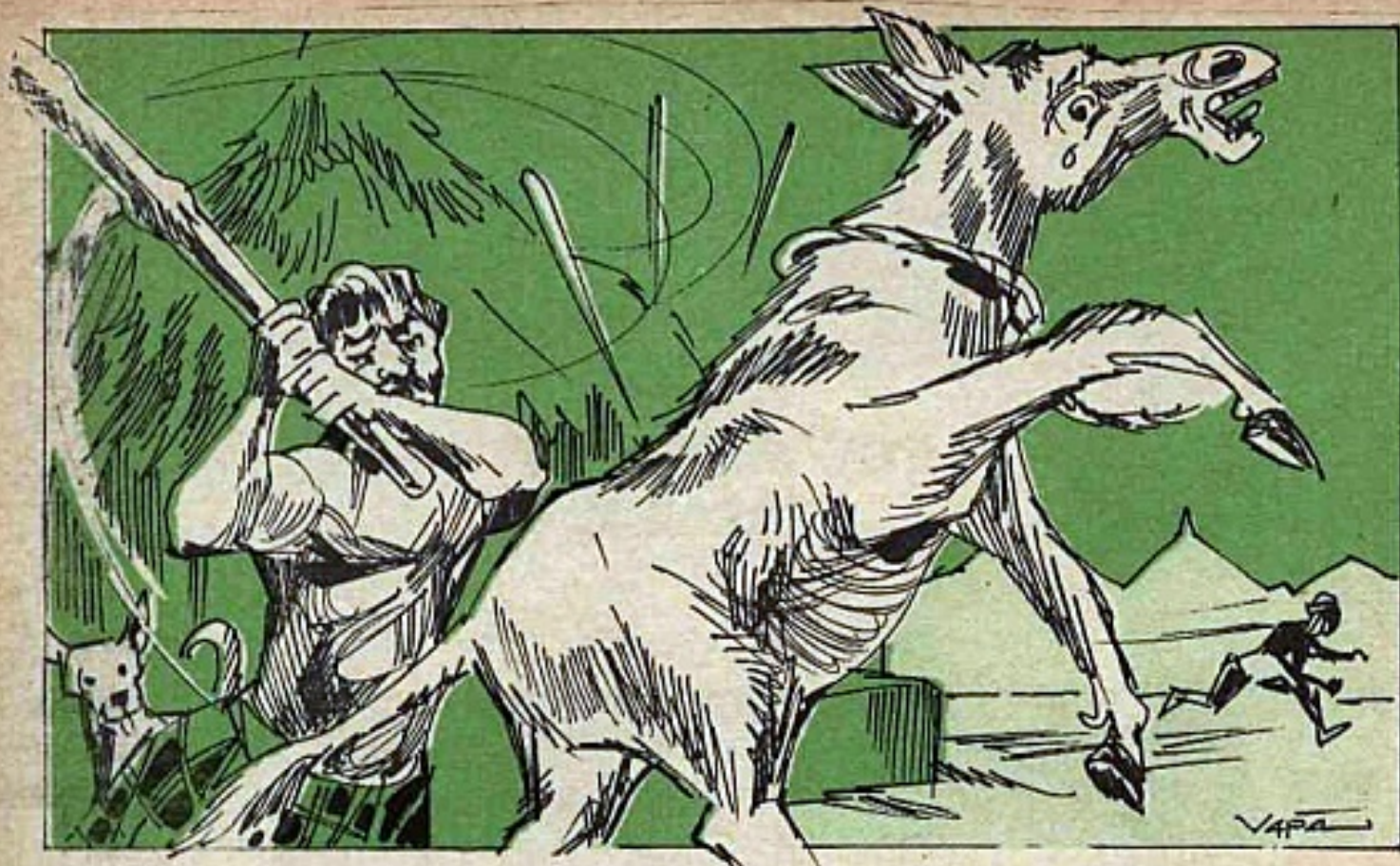
has brought nothing home because he plans to go on a pilgrimage."

"Who are you to think of such things? Is it not your duty to bark when you see a thief entering the master's house?" demanded the donkey.

"Who are you to order me? I am old and sick. My master who once took good care of me, now rarely gives me enough to eat. Once he loses something to a thief, he will remember me and again feed me well," said the dog.

"How mischievous you are! Anyway, if you don't act, I deem it my duty to awaken the master," said the donkey.

"Don't be stupid. If you go to do what is not your business, I warn you, you'd land yourself in difficulty!" said the dog.



But the donkey paid no heed to the dog's warning. He started braying at the peak of his voice and jumped and rolled on the ground to wake up his master.

The donkey's behaviour scared the thief. He ran away. But the washerman picked up a

stick and gave a good thrashing to the donkey. "This will cure you of your midnight madness," he said while retiring to bed again.


Silently the donkey told himself, "I should have thought twice before going to perform someone else's role!"

Did You Know These Words?

Abecedarian is one who teaches the alphabet (A, B, C, D etc.) or who is learning them.

Aboulia means loss of will-power

Adamic means naked, like the first man Adam.



*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

REWARD REJECTED

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. Thunder rumbled and jackals howled. Flashes of lightning revealed weird faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the tree again and brought the corpse down. Then, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "It is said that the people who make sacrifices for a cause often go unrewarded. But there are instances to the contrary. Going to reward a man who deserved it, one might find himself in an embarrassing situation. To prove my point let me narrate to you the story of Martanda, the king of Somgarh."

The vampire went on: King Martanda had an adviser in his court, named Subhendra. It is not possible to say whether or not Subhendra himself was a warrior. But his advice on mili-



tary affairs were always sound. Whenever the commanders followed them they were victorious.

Once Martanda went out for a ceremonial hunting expedition. All his ministers, commanders, and a large number of soldiers accompanied him.

More soldiers were despatched to make a ring round the vast forest so that no dangerous beast could escape into the human locality, when scared by the hunters.

A neighbouring king, Virbhadrha, who was waiting for such an opportunity, came to seize Martanda's castle. Subhendra was the only nobleman

who was then in the castle. He found the situation very difficult. However, he did not lose heart. He gathered a few soldiers and guards and led them to the roof of the castle. From the roof-top they kept hurling fire-balls, arrows and stones at the invading enemy. They did so with such fury that Virbhadrha's army had to retreat.

Subhendra arranged for the burial of those of the enemy who had been killed. Those wounded were carried as prisoners into the palace, but were given medical treatment and all the care they needed.

King Martanda, informed of the attack, rushed back to Somgarh. He congratulated Subhendra for his courage and success; but he was unhappy over his kindness towards those injured prisoners. He put all those prisoners to death.

As if that was not enough, Martanda marched upon Virbhadrha's territory. Virbhadrha had anticipated this and had entered into alliance with some other kings. With a large army he resisted Martanda's attack. A fierce battle took place. Martanda was defeated and imprisoned. Subhendra escaped.

Virbhadrha's soldiers merci-

lessly looted the people of Somgarh. Whoever raised his voice against their tyranny was beaten up or killed.

Subhendra devoted himself to secretly mobilising some brave young men of Somgarh. One night they stormed into Virbhadra's castle and put him and his chief officers under lock. Simultaneously they set Martanda free.

As soon as the news of the seize spread, the people of Somgarh rose against Virbhadra's officials and drove them out of their country. Martanda was restored to the throne.

Without any delay Martanda passed death sentence against Virbhadra and his senior officers. He further announced that Subhendra will be the chief commander of his army.

But the very night Subhendra met the king privately and said, "My lord, I do not have any inclination for the position you have offered me. Please change your decision."

"Is your decision to reject my offer final?" asked the embarrassed king, fixing a stern look on Subhendra's face.

"Yes, my lord," replied Subhendra.



"In that case you ought to leave the country forthwith," said the king.

"Should I take this to be your order?" asked Subhendra.

The king lowered his look, but said firmly, "Well, yes!"

"Very good, my lord, I shall obey you," said Subhendra. True to his word, he left Somgarh before it was dawn.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked in a challenging tone, "Why was Subhendra so unwilling to accept the position offered to him? A man who so successfully dispelled an attack and then so cleverly freed his king and his

kingdom could not have been unfit for the position! What is more baffling, how could the king ask him to leave the kingdom? If he was unwilling to become the commander, the king could surely honour him in some other way! But, far from doing that, how could the king exile him? O King, answer me if you can. If you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders."

Answered King Vikram forthwith: "Subhendra was an independent-minded man. He used to advise the king. Were he to accept the appointment, he would be required to obey the king. No longer would he be able to act per his free will.

"Besides, Subhendra was humanitarian and patriotic. His humanitarianism was

evident in the arrangements he made to nurse the wounded enemy soldiers. If he organised an insurrection against Virbhadrā, it was because Virbhadrā proved a tyrant. Had Virbhadrā ruled with kindness, perhaps Subhendra would not have rebelled against him.

"King Martanda understood Subhendra's nature. He felt that such a person should be either under his control or should leave his kingdom. To let him live independently after he had proved so efficient and had grown so popular, would be unsafe for any king. If situation so demanded, Subhendra would not have hesitated to rise against Martanda."

No sooner had the king concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE TRAGEDY OF KOMAGATA MARU

Around 1912 the British rulers of India learnt that some Indians were trying to organise secret societies in London, Paris and other places. Such societies were meant to train people and raise funds for the freedom fight in India.

The rulers decided to keep a close watch on Indians settling abroad and their activities. The British had a number of colonies. Generally there was free movement of people among the colonies. A number of

Indians went over to Canada in search of work. Suddenly the Canadian Government banned the entry of any Indian into its territory unless he came by a ship that sailed straight from India to Canada.

Such a condition for an Indian's entry into Canada was an example of hypocrisy. The Government knew very well that there was no direct ship between the two countries!

But there was a patriot who took up the challenge. He was





Gurdit Singh, an enterprising man who carried on trade in Hong Kong and Singapore. He chartered a Japanese ship, "Komagata Maru", and from Hong Kong sailed for Vancouver in Canada.

The ship, with nearly four hundred passengers and crew—the passengers mostly Punjabis and the crew Japanese—touched Vancouver on May 23, 1914. The Canadian Government felt outwitted. Going back on its word, the Government forbade the passengers to get down. Next it ordered the ship to leave the Canadian shore.

But the passengers were in no

mood to accept such a whimsical order. They insisted on disembarking, but were forcibly prevented from doing so. The ship was cordoned off by the Canadian navy.

Days passed and then weeks. The stock of food in the ship was exhausted. The passengers were mostly poor. They had not carried enough money to buy food from the port through the Japanese crew. It became more and more difficult for them to get even drinking water.

After nearly two months the passengers grew desperate. No doubt, among them there were some spirited men who intended to help the Indian freedom movement from Canada. They took the leadership. It was decided that the passengers would march out to the land. If they were attacked, they would fight until death.

The Canadian authorities got the hint of the passengers' resolution. They sent two warships to force the "Komagata Maru" to withdraw.

The passengers came out to the deck. No one knows who began it—but soon an unequal battle broke out. The Canadians fired from their ships. The Indians responded by

throwing chunks of wood, sticks and coals!

Some of the passengers had their friends—most probably revolutionaries—in the city of Vancouver. It was noticed that from a hillock on the shore someone signalled to the passengers to fight on. Through the signal the mysterious man further said that if they died, their friends would see to it that the whole of Vancouver went up in smoke!

The message was intercepted by the intelligence police of Canada. Immediately the attitude of the authorities changed. They sent adequate food and

drink to the "Komagata Maru" and, with several promises persuaded the ship to return.

The ship sailed back for Calcutta. Before it entered the harbour, it was stopped and the passengers were thoroughly searched and humiliated. At Calcutta, they were asked, at the point of guns, to embark a train for Punjab.

Well, the passengers had left Punjab in search of work. Now, after they had gone through a series of travails and had spent the last pie they had, they were being ordered back to Punjab!

They revolted against the



order and set out in a procession into the city. They were stopped and brought back to the harbour. Then they were asked to board the very ship that caused them so much misery.

They were at the end of their patience. They refused to obey the order. The British police tried to force them backward towards the harbour. They resisted. The police fired upon them and bayoneted them mercilessly. About forty people died.

Two or three passengers possessed revolvers. Now they used them. Among two or three who fell on the British

side was Sergeant Major Eastwood.

The passengers ran helter skelter—random shots chasing them and killing them. Many were arrested after being wounded. Those who escaped included the leader, Gurdit Singh.

The news of the strange fight spread, though the rulers tried to play it down. The tragedy of the "Komagata Maru" focused the attention of the civilised world on the misfortune of the people under the colonial rule. It had a great impact on the Indians and it gave the freedom struggle a strong impetus.

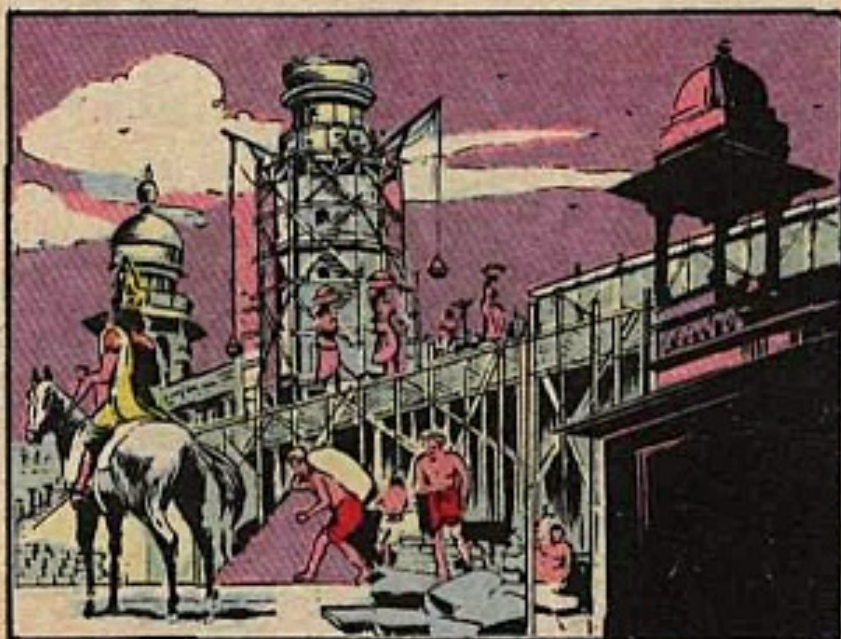


A HERO IN THE FRONTIER

More than two thousand years ago hordes of nomads invaded the north-west frontier of India again and again. It was difficult for any Indian king to crush them, for they never settled down anywhere.



In course of time India won the hearts of those nomads. They settled down as peaceful citizens and were known as the Kushans. They built villages, tilled the soil, and took to trade.

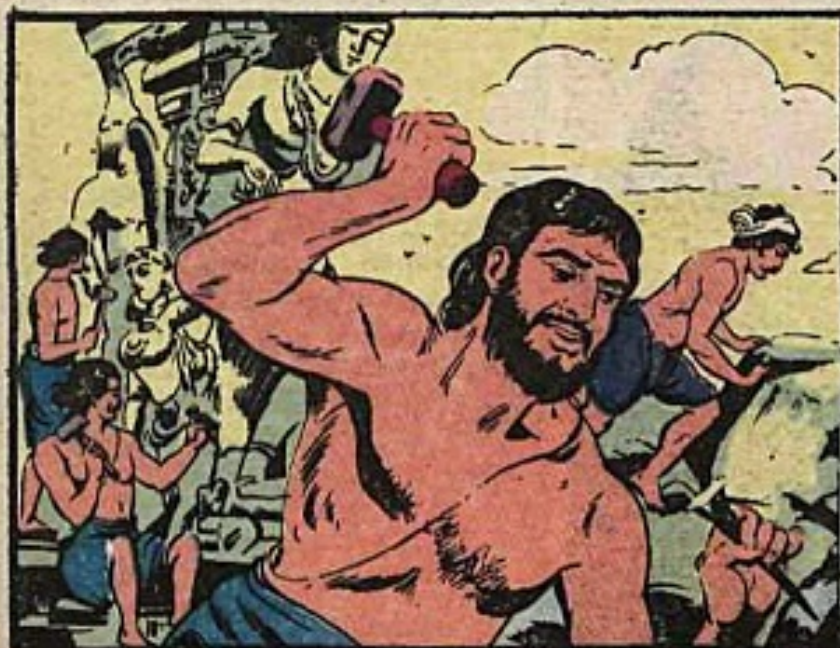


By and by their chiefs became powerful. One of them, Kadfishes, founded a dynasty at Purushpur, now known as Peshawar. The third king of the dynasty was Kanishka—a great builder and conqueror. He made Purushpur an invincible fort-city.



In A.D. 78 Kanishka introduced a new calendar that is known to this day as the Saka Era. An ambitious conqueror, he led a huge army into Chinese Turkestan, Yarkand, and Kashgar. He subdued numerous rulers of India and nearby lands.

But he turned a peaceful monarch soon. He convened a great Buddhist conference—known as the Fourth Council—at Kundala Vana Vihara in Kashmir. The decisions of the conference were inscribed on copper-sheets and preserved for posterity.



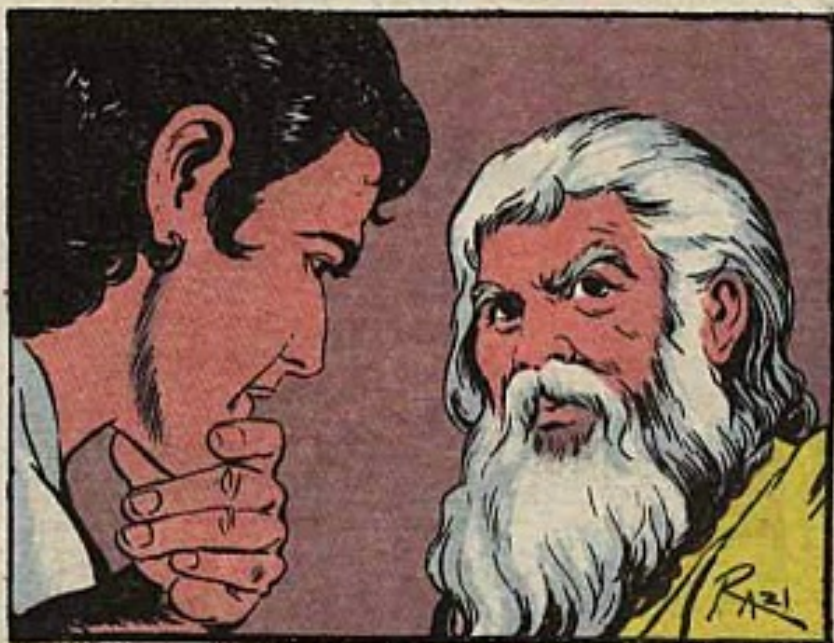
Kanishka's court at Purushpur had highly gifted scholars, such as Asvaghosha the poet, Nagarjuna the philosopher, and Charaka the physician. Art and sculpture flourished under his patronage—the Gandhara school of art in particular.

So poignant was the poetry of Kanishka's court-poet that some horses were found shedding tears while he was reciting his verses in solitude. The poet was called Asvaghosha thereafter. He was the author of the *Buddha charita*.



Nagarjuna, a great thinker, had a worthy disciple, Aryadeva. Legend says that when the two first met, Nagarjuna held forth a bowl of water. Aryadeva threw a needle into it. The water symbolised knowledge. The needle symbolised Aryadeva's desire to reach the bottom of knowledge.

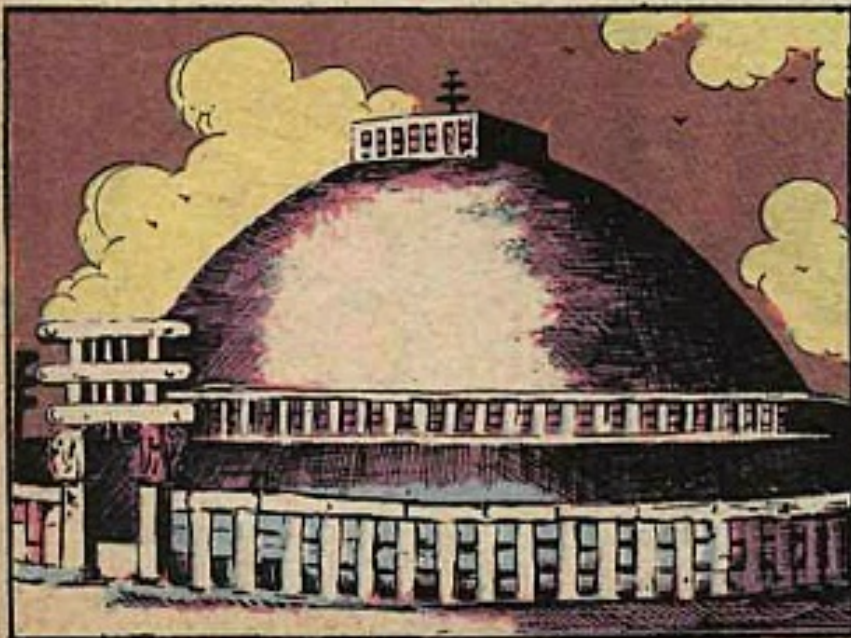
Long long ago, in the mythical era, the sage Artreya had explained the causes of diseases and the principles of cure to his disciple, Agnivesha. Their conversation was known as *Agnivesha-Samhita*. But the work had almost been lost.





Charaka, the great physician, revived the work under Kanishka's patronage. He revised it so thoroughly that it became known by his name, as the *Charaka-Samhita*. He also meditated in the Himalaya to hit upon the secret qualities of the various herbs.

The Kushans under Kanishka became totally identified with the Indians. For a long time thereafter other nomadic tribes could not dare to raid India because of the forceful resistance the powerful Kushans offered to them.



At Purushpur Kanishka built a *Stupa* that contained the sacred Relics of the Buddha. It was Six hundred feet high and, according to impressions left by travellers, a lofty sight. Purushpur (Peshwar) today is a part of Pakistan.

The Queen's Necklace

What a pleasant coincidence for Ravi and Raman! Ravi's uncle, Shyam Gupta, happened to visit Calcutta when the two friends were there. Gupta was very fond of Ravi. And before long he took a liking for Raman.

"Why don't you come with me to my city? There is still a fortnight for your schools to open!" said Gupta.

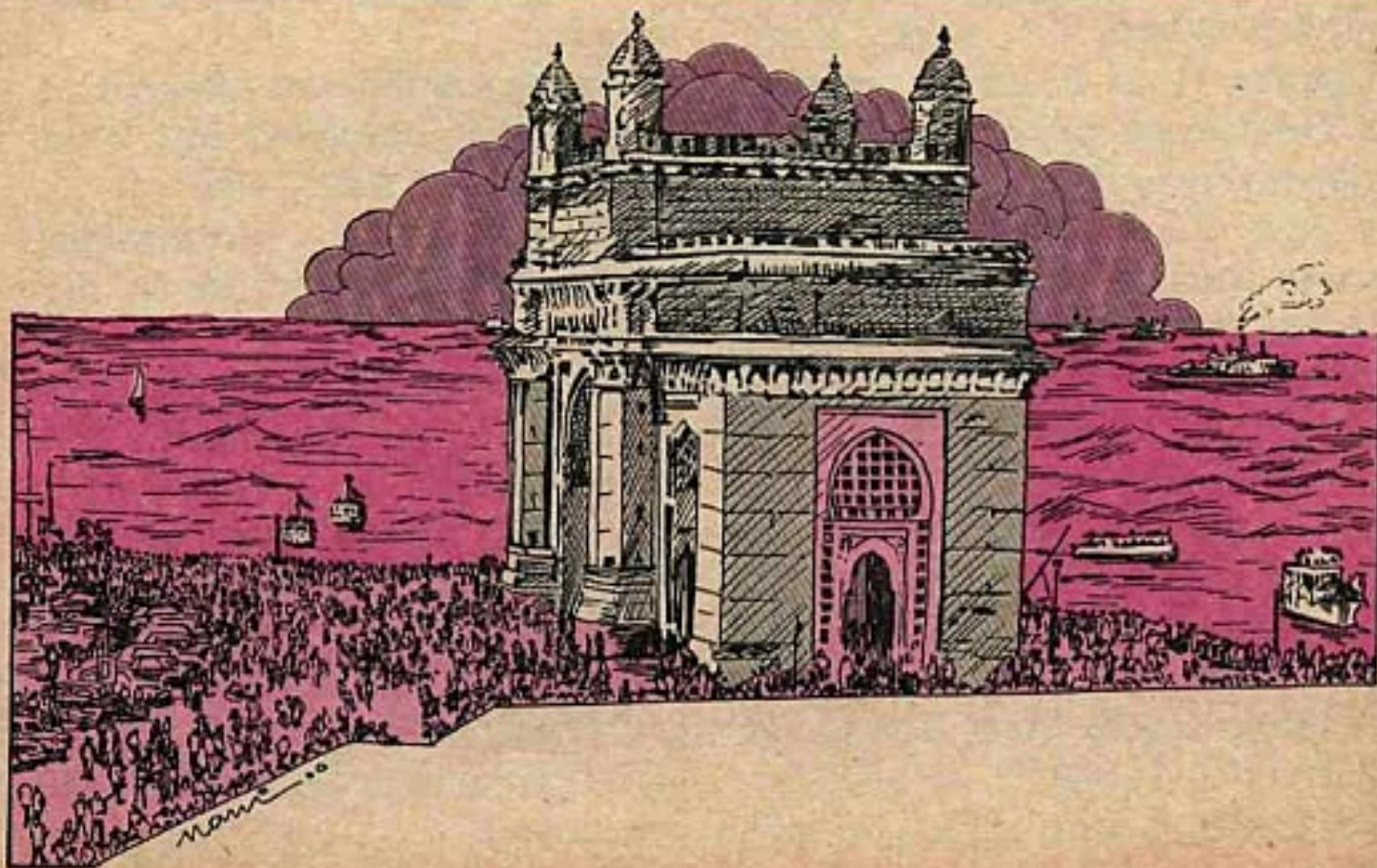
Ravi and Raman looked at each other—their eyes giving out sparks of joy. They would love to visit Gupta's city—that was

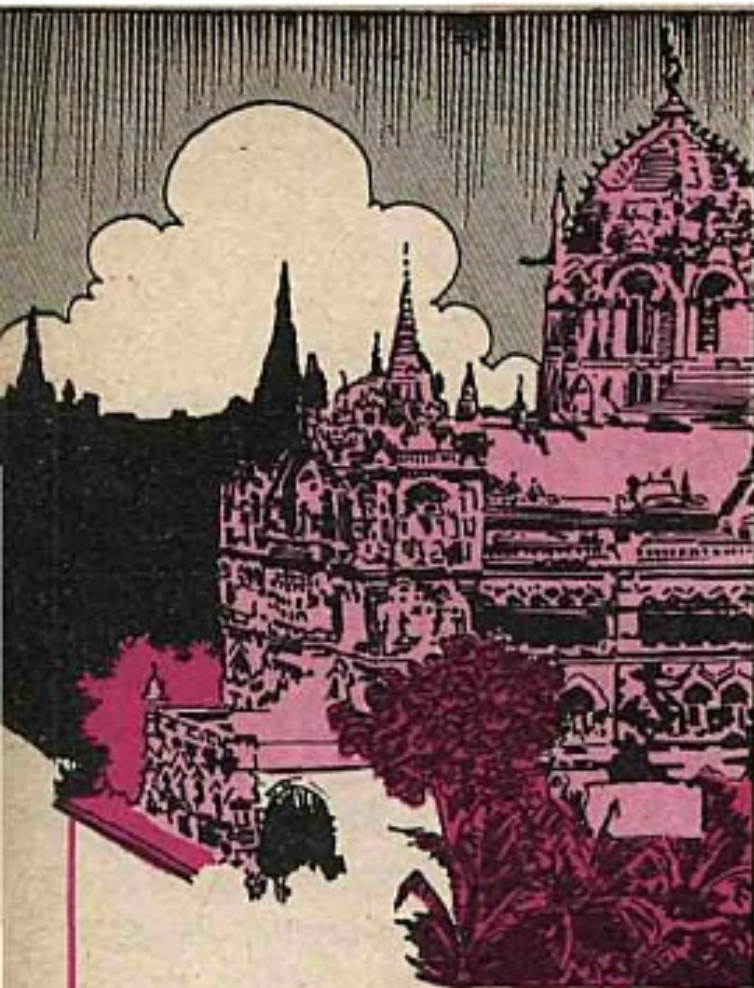
no other than Bombay!

Things moved fast. They boarded the train for Bombay.

Gupta ran a hotel in Bombay, but his interest was wide. On their way the boys were delighted to hear from him the amazing story of Bombay:

Bombay, described by foreigners as *Prima Urbis* or "the City Beautiful" of India, used to be a group of islets, separated from the main land by creeks and channels and hillocks. The Portuguese took control of the





area in the early 16th century, but did not find it much profitable. When, in 1661, King Charles II of England married a Portuguese princess, Bombay was given to him as dowry!

And King Charles did not value Bombay to be more than worth ten pounds a year! He leased it out to the East India Company for that much rent.

"Fantastic— isn't it?— that the same Bombay should become one of the most precious chunks of ground on the earth!" observed Gupta.

"But, Uncle, how did it get its name? It seems to have no particular meaning!" asked

Ravi.

"It has got quite a significant meaning. It is from *Mumbai* or *Mumbabai*, the deity worshipped by the local fishermen since olden days. She is still there—the founding deity of the city," replied Gupta.

Bombay began impressing the young visitors right from their touching its brink—on the railway platform of the Victoria Terminus. The station building looked as dignified and artistic as a cathedral.

"The station reminds me, boys, that India's first locomotive train roared forth from Bombay. That was in 1853. It went up to Thana," said Gupta.

Gupta's hotel was situated in a lane that branched out from the Marine Drive—one of the most charming promenades along the sea anywhere in the world.

From the roof of Gupta's hotel—a modest building—could be seen the Malabar Hill, the most elegant part of this elegant city. It was late in the afternoon when Gupta drove the boys up there.

"What is happening here?" asked Raman, a bit surprised at the crowd.

"It is generally crowded at this hour. More so, it is a Sunday. Why, is it not an excellent spot for relaxation?"

"It is," agreed Ravi and Raman as they strolled through the beautiful Kamala Nehru Park with its aquarium, and the 'Hanging Garden' atop the reservoir with its hedges cut to look like a variety of animals.

"Look at that fortification—the Tower of Silence. The Parsees of India, according to their age-old custom, leave their dead inside it—to be consumed by vultures," said Gupta pointing at a wall covered by bushes and creepers.

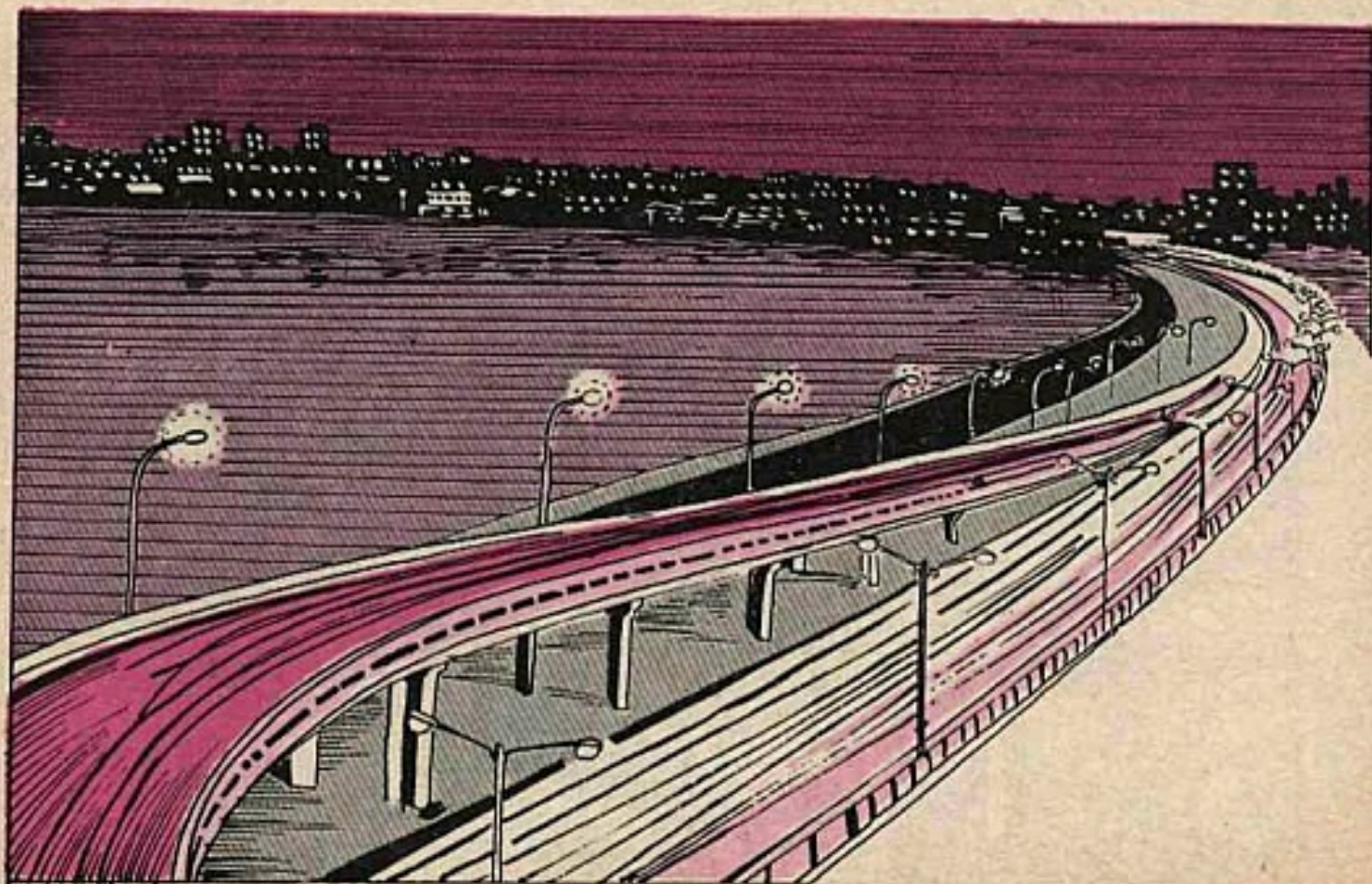
"The Parsees came from Persia, didn't they?"

"Yes. In the 7th century. Their descendants are as zealous Indians as you and I. Their contribution to the growth of this city is great."

Evening set in as they talked and munched nuts. Lights flashed along the Marine Drive. The three stood viewing the promenade from a spot that conveniently overlooked it.

"Now I appreciate why the semi-circular Marine Drive is known as the *Queen's Necklace*!" said Ravi.

"So do I," said Raman.



THURSDAY

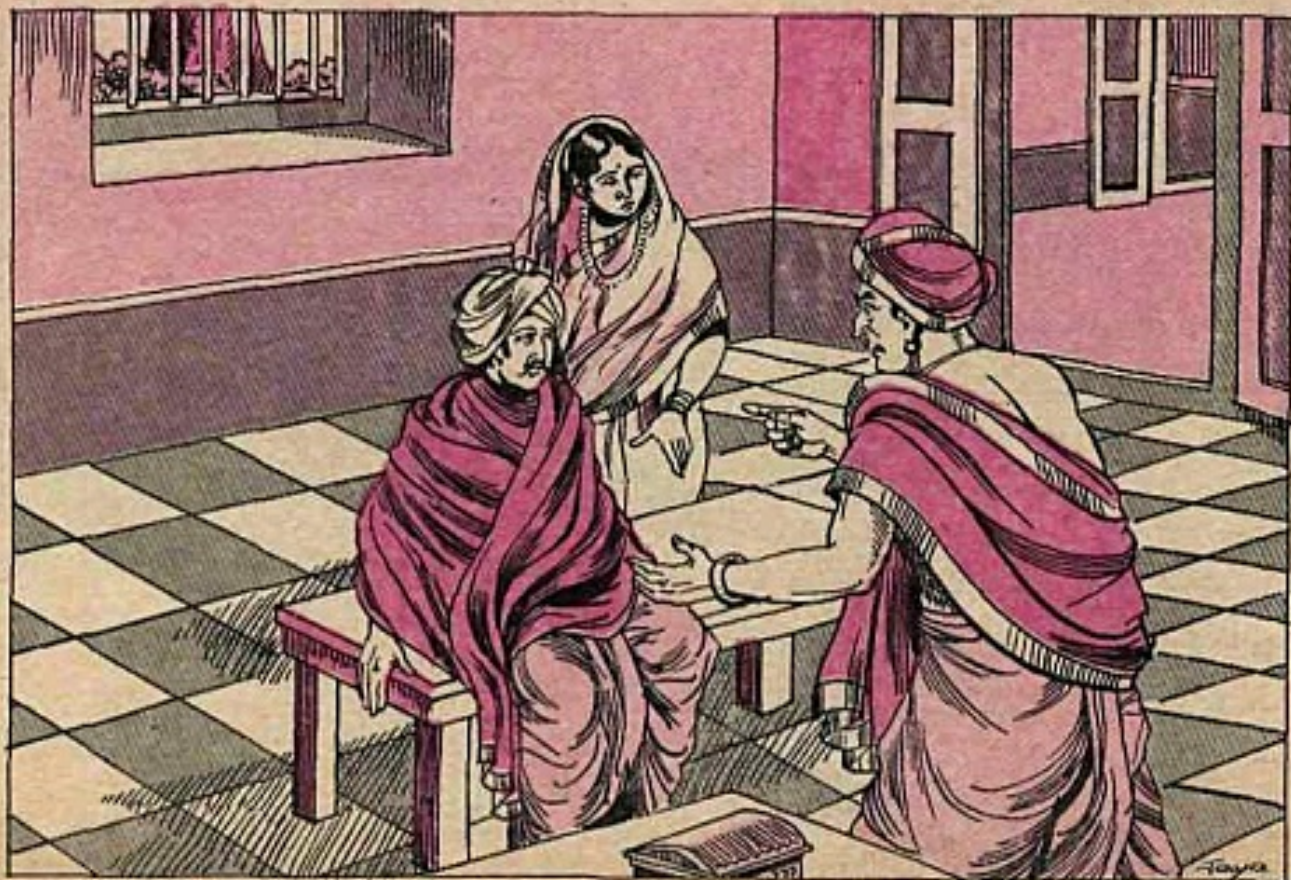
Kishansingh was a wealthy man and educated too. But he nursed a superstition: he was under the impression that to spend money on Thursday was to incur the wrath of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth.

It was on a Thursday that he fell ill. Shastri, the physician, advised him to send for a costly medicine from the town.

"But how can I spend on medicine on a Thursday?" asked Kishansingh.

"Who asked you to fall ill on a Thursday?" asked the physician with some irritation. "Look here," he said again, "Goddess Lakshmi has given you wealth for your welfare, not for your ill-fare. It is an insult to Her to go without treatment in Her name. Do as you please, but give me my fees at once!"

Kishansingh saw that he has to pay to the physician, after-all, even though it was a Thursday. Why not pay for the medicine then? He bought the medicine and was cured of his sickness.





THE KING AND THE BANDIT

Bhadradesh was the name of the kingdom. The king's name was Kuber. The kingdom abounded in wealth. The cycle of seasons ran properly. The fields teemed with corn. Even then all was not well. It was because the king was surrounded by a gang of flatterers. They were bribed by some wealthy men and big officials of the court. All the wealth of the country went to these three groups of men who tyrannised over the common people.

Suddenly a bandit emerged in the kingdom. Whatever be his real name he was popularly called the 'Friend'. He was extremely daring. Alone he looted the wealthy men and the officials, and sometimes the king's treasuries. But all knew that every pie of what he looted went to the poor and the mise-

nable.

The common people spoke of the 'Friend' with love and affection. But he became the cause of terror for the wealthy men and the powerful officials. They asked the king to put an end to the menace as soon as possible.

The king threatened his sepoy's saying that unless they captured the bandit they would all be punished. The sepoy's did their best, but the 'Friend' kept on eluding them. All knew how he did so: First of all he was a pastmaster in his work; secondly, once he entered a village or a crowd he was safe. Even at the threat of death nobody would betray him to the police.

The king announced a reward of a hundred gold mohurs for the man who would help

capture the bandit. As days passed the amount was raised to two hundred, five hundred, and a full thousand. But it yielded no result.

The king then took recourse to a new trick. He got some innocent people arrested. It was given out that they were the bandit's friends. They were to be punished, because they did not disclose where the bandit lived.

The king thought that in order to secure the liberty of all those innocent prisoners the bandit would surrender himself to him. But nothing like that happened.

The king was growing desperate. At the advice of his flatterers he publicly hanged two of those innocent prisoners. It was widely publicised that the men were hanged because they refused to divulge where lived the bandit. The other prisoners were to be hanged shortly.

The day after the hanging the bandit surrendered himself to the sepoys. They produced him before the king.

"What a cruel fellow you are! Had you surrendered earlier, the two innocent men would not have lost their lives!" said the king.

There was no sign of regret



in the bandit's face. "I pity you! You know very well that it is a crime and a sin to hang innocent people. But you did it just to hide your failure to catch me. Such an act of cruelty has no parallel!" said the bandit loudly.

"It is my duty of capture a bandit. When I failed to do so in the normal process, I had to think of other means," explained the king.

"Have you ever given thought to the cause of your failure to capture me?" asked the bandit.

"I have. You dodge my sepoy's by bribing the people," answered the king.

The bandit burst into laughter. "I never expected such a foolish explanation from a king. How many people can I bribe? Can I give more than a thousand gold mohurs—the price you've fixed on my head—to everyone. The fact is, I was doing what you ought to have done. That is why the respect and love due to you came to me. They would not allow me to appear before you even when you imprisoned those innocent men—not even after your hanging two of them. I came out forcibly, because I knew that those cruel fellows who surround you and flatter you are capable of influencing



you to hang many more prisoners! But know this, you will not be excused for such misdeeds—neither by God nor by the people!” said the bandit.

The king heard hullabaloo outside the court. He was told that thousands of people had gathered before the palace. They were anxious about the ‘Friend’. Some of them offered to be hanged in lieu of the bandit.

The king kept quiet for a moment and then asked the bandit, “You said that you are doing what I ought to have done. Do you mean to say that it is a king’s duty to loot and plunder?”

“No, it is a king’s duty to protect the subjects from being looted and plundered by a few. I was looting only those who were greater bandits. Only, they

had obtained a licence to loot the people. I had no licence,” answered the bandit.

“It seems you want to become the king!” observed the king.

“No. I do not have the ability to rule a kingdom. All I want you to do is to rule your land in a manner so that the people won’t have to trust a bandit more than a king,” said the bandit as he began to walk away.

“My lord! The bandit is escaping!” shouted some of the flatterers.

“Shut up!” blurted out the king. “He is no bandit, but a friend. You are the bandits!”

Thereafter King Kuber dismissed the gang of flatterers from the court. He did his best to make his administration as sound as possible.





A CHALLENGE

Pranob was a wealthy villager. He passed his time well, looking after the few acres of land he had.

One day three friends of his came from the town and spent a night with him. One was a trader, the other was a musician and the third one was an officer of the king. Pranob took good care of them. As they talked, the three friends got the idea that Pranob had much knowledge of their vocations.

One of them asked Pranob, "It seems you know much about many things. Can you tell us which one of the vocations of we four is the best vocation?"

"My brother, each vocation has its own speciality and great-

ness. If you are doing your work sincerely and are satisfied with it, it is good enough for you," replied Pranob.

The three guests laughed. "You are evading the issue. You certainly cannot equate farming with trade which requires much exercise of brain, or with music which requires genius, or with the responsibility of an officer which requires intelligence and alertness!" said the three.

"My friends, you do not understand my point. Each work can be done either efficiently or inefficiently. No work is inferior to another work. The question is, how one does it," Pranob tried to explain.



"Again you are being vague. There are works and works. Some works require greater skill. Do you really believe that farming requires as much skill as trade or administration or music?" demanded the friends.

Pranob grew grave. "Well, I am a farmer, but if you so desire, I can prove my merit in your vocations too," said he.

The three guests looked agitated. They took this as a challenge and said that if Pranob can prove what he said, each of them will reward him with a hundred gold mohurs.

Pranob accepted the bet. A few months passed. He paid a

visit to the town. First, he became the trader's guest. The trader had several shops. One of them sold fresh vegetables that arrived from the rural areas. Pranob made a selection of vegetables and fruits from that shop and carried them in a sack to the most aristocratic area of the town. He sat down on the pavement and began selling them at a price higher than the market price.

"Why do you charge more than they do in the market?" asked a buyer.

"It is because these are specially grown things—meant for people who appreciate good taste. Once you eat my stuff you will spend hours looking for me," exclaimed Pranob.

His sack was emptied in no time.

Next day, he carried vegetables to an area of the town inhabited by poorer people. He sat down near a market and offered his goods at a price which was slightly lower than the price quoted by other sellers. Again, in no time his sack got empty.

The trader friend admitted that Pranob indeed understood the secret of business well and had he taken to trading he would

have become quite successful.

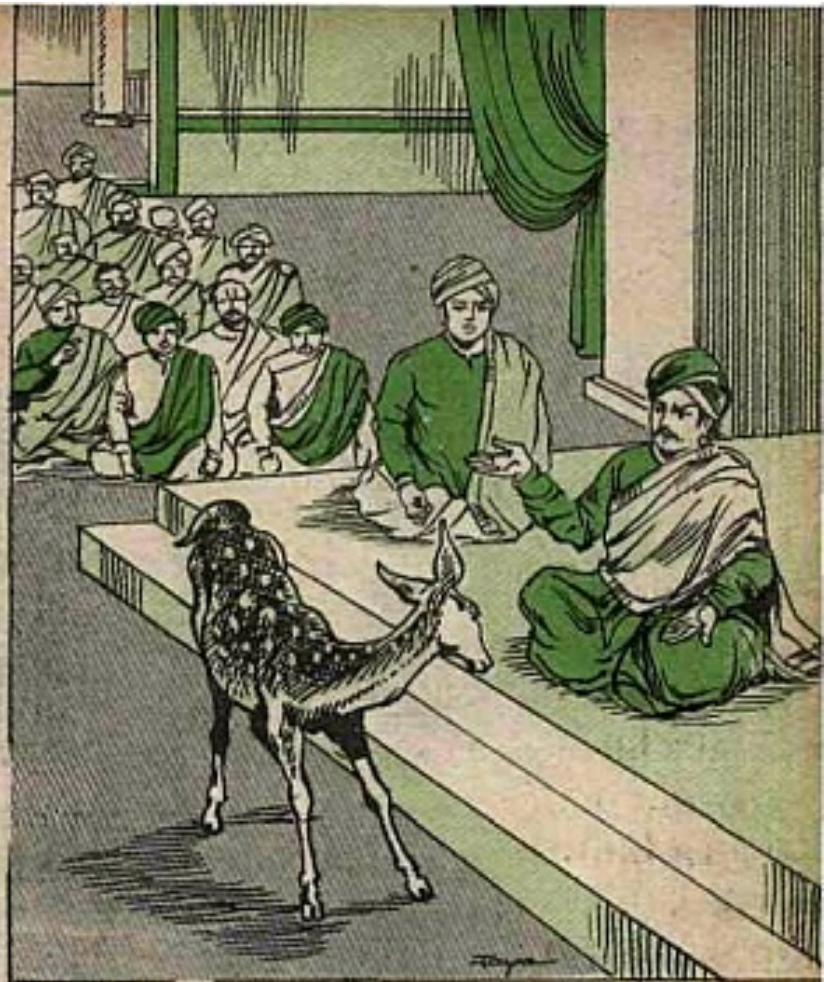
Next Pranob became the musician's guest. He had carried a deer with him. He announced that there would be a singing competition between him and his host. The listeners would decide who between the two was the superior singer.

The session began with the musician singing a classical song. The listeners applauded him. Then it was Pranob's turn to sing. He sang a light song that was sweet. The theme of the song was a lover's call to his beloved who was addressed as 'Sakhi'. The deer was roaming about in the field. As Pranob began singing, all were amazed to see the deer slowly approaching the hall. As Pranob went on with the song, the deer came closer to him and stood nodding right in front of him.

The audience burst into a prolonged applause when Pranob finished. According to them Pranob was the superior singer, for his song could attract even an animal!

After the listeners dispersed, the musician asked Pranob, "My friend, how could you attract the deer?"

"It was a trick. I had trained the deer to respond to the word



'Sakhi'. As my song repeated the word, the deer came closer to me," explained Pranob. Whatever that be, the musician accepted defeat.

Next, Pranob met his officer friend.

"I will see to it that you get an increment in your salary," he told the officer.

"How impudent you are! I am serving the king for years. Don't you think that the king knows me well enough? Why should he increase my salary at your request?" asked the officer with dismay.

Next day Pranob met the minister and gave him a gift.

The minister was pleased. "What can I do for you?" he asked.

"All I want is a brief meeting with the king," said Pranob.

The minister fixed Pranob's appointment with the king. Pranob got a small verse in praise of the king composed by a poet-friend of his. Upon meeting the king he recited the verse.

"Who is its author?" asked the king, feeling pleased.

"I do not know, my lord, but a friend of mine who is in your service recites this verse early in the morning every day, before beginning his daily work. It is this practice of his that inspired me to have a look at you," replied Pranob.

At the king's query Pranob revealed the name of his friend. The king, happy with his officer, increased his salary.

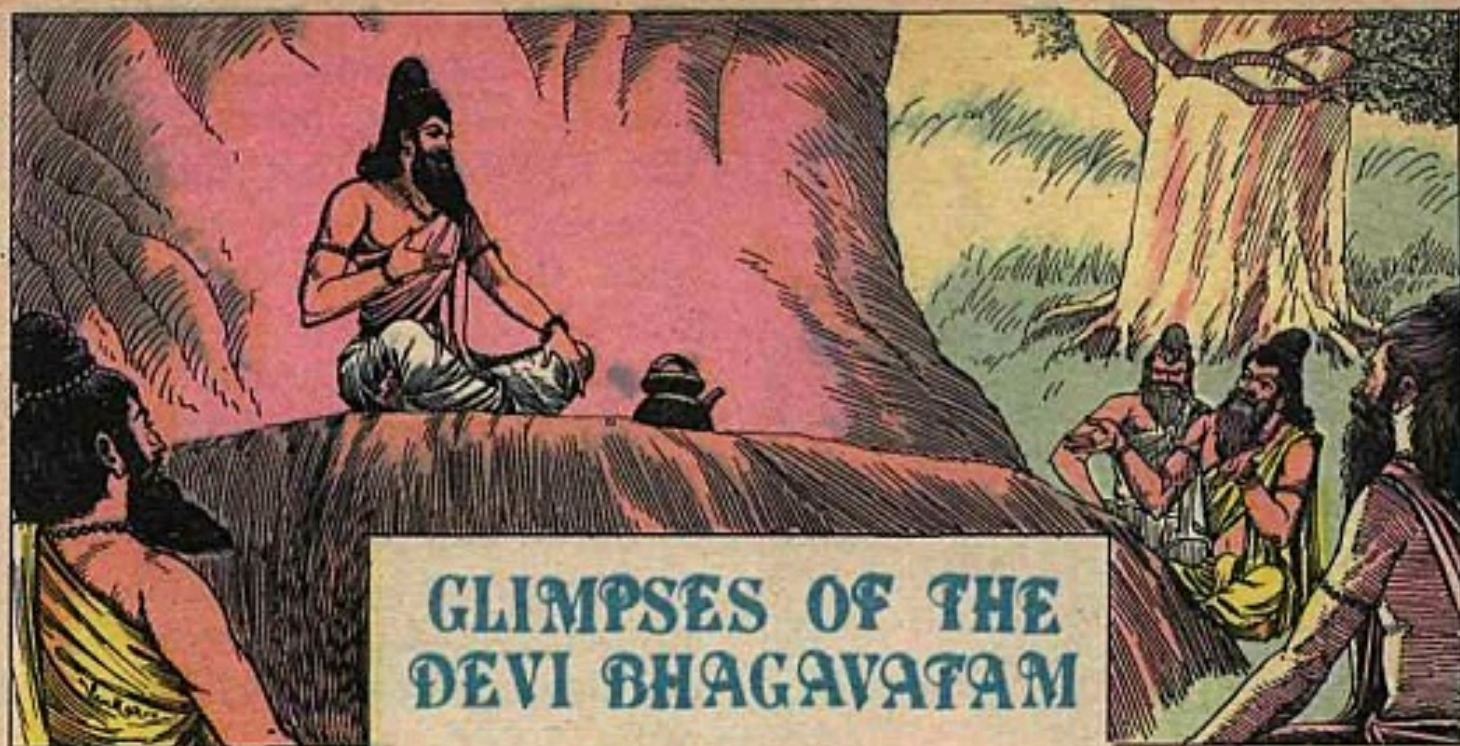
The officer had to admit that Pranob was capable of managing

himself and prospering even in the court.

The four friends gathered over a dinner. "Why are you wasting your life in the village? Why don't you come over to the town, where your talents could really flourish?" asked his friends.

Pranob laughed, "My brothers, my performance in all the three cases were mere tricks. They can bring a momentary success, but cannot sustain one in his vocation. Truly, you three are much more gifted than me in your works. No doubt, I am able to carry on successfully the work I have chosen—farming. What I meant to prove is that every work is good and great when done properly. No work is inferior to another work," stated Pranob. His friends agreed.





GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

Suta, the sage, went on narrating the episodes of bygone times to the other sages.

“Infinite is the power of the Divine Mother. Men worship many gods. But wherefrom do the gods derive their strength? It is from the Divine Mother, the Supreme *Shakti*,” said Suta, and he illustrated his point by the following narration:

There had been a time when even Vishnu, the Great God who sustains the universe, was lying as an infant on a banian leaf that floated in the sea of consciousness. In that condition he had had no memory of his past, no knowledge of the future. He

wondered and desired to know who he was. It is in her infinite compassion that the Divine Mother manifested before him. At her sight, knowledge flashed in the infant Vishnu’s mind. The Divine Mother is the repository of all knowledge, love and strength.

Suta went on :

Once upon a time, when all was water, two demons, Madhu and Kaitav by name, had a glimpse of the Divine Mother. Inspired by the vision, they devoted a thousand years in prayer to invoke Her Grace. At last the Divine Mother appeared before them and offered them a

2. The Mortal King and the immortal Nymph



boon.

"Grant that we would die only when we wish to die," the demons begged of Her.

"Your wish is granted," said the Divine Mother and She disappeared.

The two demons grew so proud that they soon challenged Vishnu to a fight. When Madhu was tired, he took rest and let Kaitav fight. When Kaitav was tired, Madhu fought. But there was nobody to come to Vishnu's aid. Soon Vishnu was tired and proposed that they cease fighting for a while.

The two demons agreed to the proposal. During his respite

Vishnu concentrated on the mystery of the demons' zeal. The knowledge that they had obtained a boon to die only when they wished flashed in him.

Vishnu prayed to the Divine Mother to come to his rescue. The Mother was pleased. She withdrew that part of Her power which works as intelligence in all beings. Consequently, the two demons began swelling with pride.

"I have fought many a demon, but never have I seen brave ones like you. Why don't you ask me for a boon?" asked Vishnu.

The demons laughed. "Vishnu! You are the one who is about to be vanquished. How can we, the victors, pray for a boon from the vanquished? Better you ask for a boon from us! We promise to grant it," they said.

"Very well. Grant that you will die in my hands!" said Vishnu.

The demons were outwitted. "Let it be so," they said.

Vishnu killed the demons. It was out of their fat or *Meda* that the earth was made. That is why the earth has a name, *Medini*.

The sages asked Suta, "You had as your friend Shuka, the son of Vyasa. When and how was he born?"

Narrated Suta: Once Vyasa, while gazing at a flame, thought, "I wonder if there was a woman who was capable of giving birth to a son as pure as this flame!"

Just then a beautiful nymph called Ghritachi was passing by, followed by Madana, the god of love. Vyasa was charmed by her, but he tried to take his attention away from her, lest the nymph would one day desert him, as Urvashi deserted Pururavas.

"Will you please tell us a little about Urvashi and Pururavas?" the listeners asked Suta. The sage told the following episode:

Long ago there was a king named Pururavas. He was so pious and powerful that he could pay visits to the heavenly abode of the gods. One day he saw Urvashi, the celebrated nymph, in the court of Indra. The mortal king and the immortal nymph were attracted towards each other.

Urvashi, because of her weakness for a man, forfeited her right to dwell in heaven for the time being. She came down to earth and lived as Pururavas'



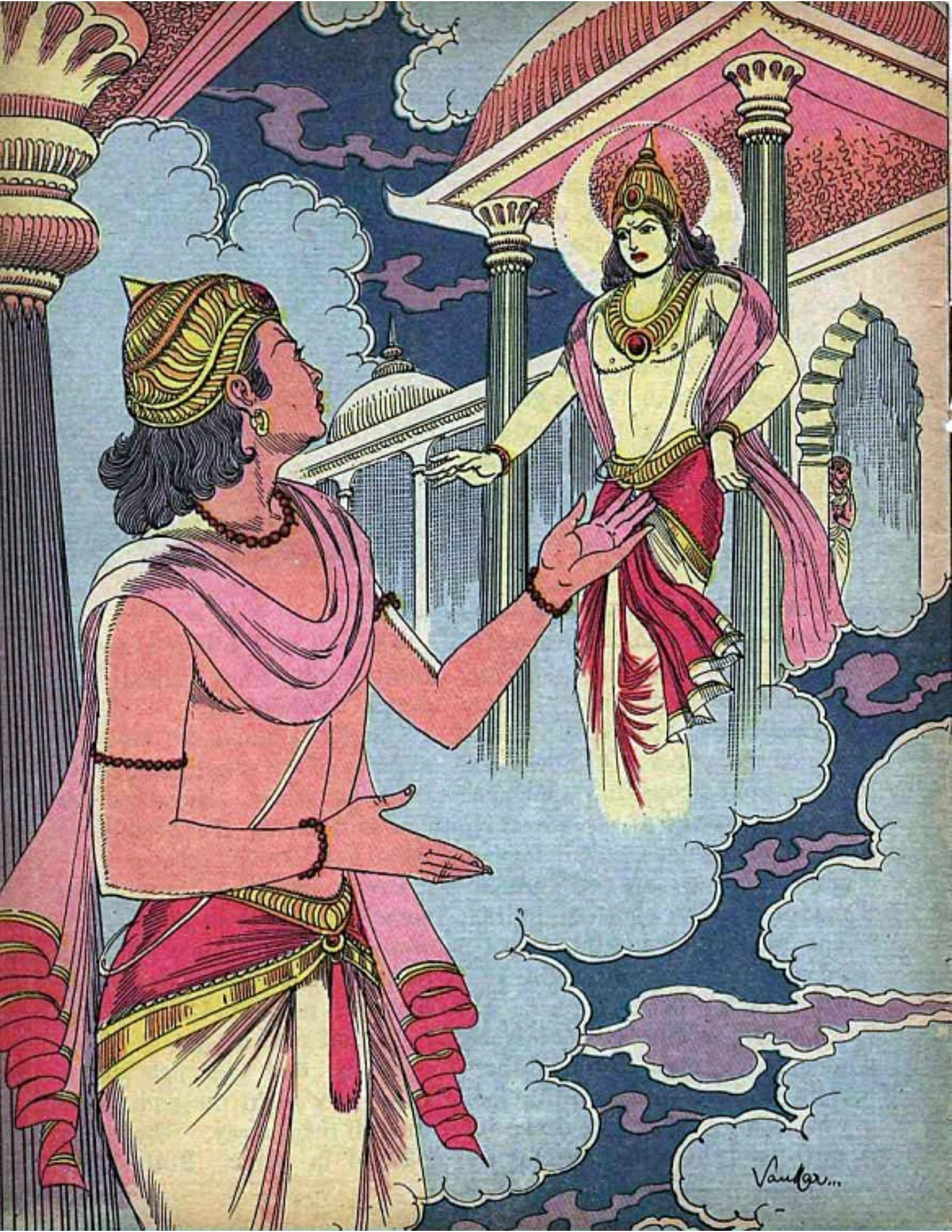
wife.

The joy of the mortal lovers could hardly be described! The couple lived happily.

But Indra could not bear the absence of the celestial danseuse from his court. He asked his courtiers to do the needful to make her return to heaven.

Pururavas had to comply with some conditions so that Urvashi would stay with him. He was never to be seen clumsily dressed like other mortals. Urvashi would not stand such a sight.

Urvashi had two pet lambs. One rainy night the gods came to steal them away. The lambs bleated in panic. Both Puru-



ravas and Urvasi woke up. Pururavas jumped off his bed in order to chase the thieves. He had no chance to arrange his clothes. Just then prolonged lightning showed to Urvasi how clumsy Pururavas looked.

At once she had to depart to heaven. The separation from Urvasi made Pururavas almost mad. He roamed about here and there looking for her. One day he caught a glimpse of hers near a lake. His voice charged with emotion, he said, "Come back to me, O Urvasi, for I cannot live without you. Haven't I loved you more than

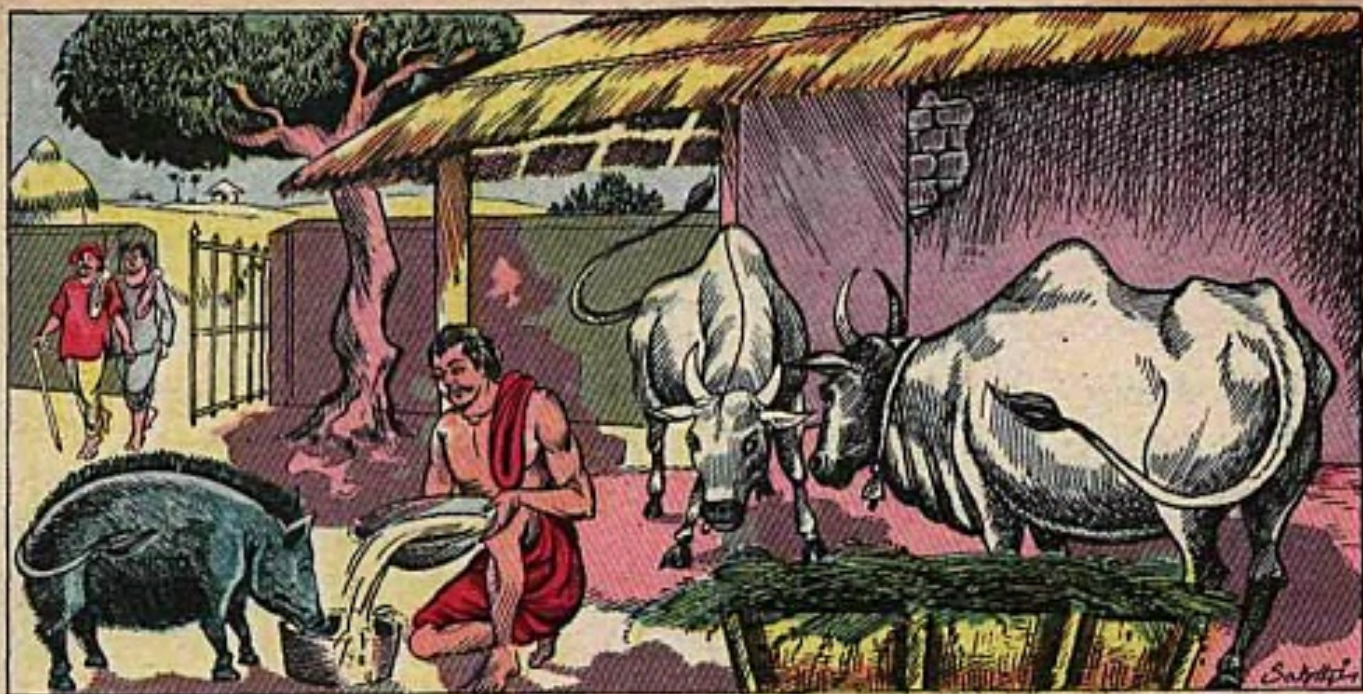
my life? Haven't I done everything possible to please you?"

"You have, O dear King. But such is the fate that an immortal cannot live with a mortal forever. That is why we had to be bound by certain conditions. Forget me, O King, and give all your attention to the business of your kingdom," said Urvasi and, with a sigh, she disappeared.

Although Vyasadeva remembered this incident, he could not check his love for Ghritachi. It was this nymph who gave birth to Shukadeva.

Contd.





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

The Pig Who Ate Death

A certain rich farmer had a pair of oxen. One was a little older than the other. Both worked hard for their master.

Not far from the thatch that sheltered the oxen was kept a pig, also owned by the same master.

One day some gentlemen came to meet the farmer. Their merry chitchat could be heard for a long time. At last the farmer was seen giving a warm farewell to the guests at his gate.

Next day the farmer's servant gave the pig more food than usual. The younger of the two oxen marked it and sighed.

In the evening the younger ox observed that the pig was given not only more quantity of food, but also better quality of food.

With resentment he told the older ox, "Look at the ungrateful conduct of the farmer. We work so hard for him. But he gives us nothing better than grass or straw. To the good-for-nothing pig he is giving rice and vegetables!"

The older ox kept quiet.

The pig continued to receive special care from the farmer. Soon he grew fat and proud. Often he looked at the oxen with contempt in his eyes.

"I should be a fool to work sincerely for the farmer. He is

so unjust! And look at the pig—how contemptuously he views us!” commented the younger ox.

“Try to be more understanding towards the farmer. So far as the pig is concerned, have pity on him!” said the older ox.

“What! Pity for the fortunate?” The younger ox gave vent to his astonishment.

“He is hardly fortunate. He is eating death!” commented the older ox.

The younger one failed to understand the meaning of his senior’s words. But he felt that his words carried some ominous hint.

Some more days passed. The farmer’s house grew festive. His daughter was married to a young man from another village.

The day after the marriage the farmer’s servants led the pig

away to a corner. As the young ox looked on with horror, they killed the pig.

“Why were they pouring so much care on the pig if they meant to kill him?” he asked the older ox with anguish.

“It is because they meant to kill him that they cared so much for him,” said the older ox. “Did I not tell you that he was eating death in the form of more food? The day those visitors came and the marriage was finalised the farmer decided to sacrifice the pig to entertain the bridegroom’s party. That is why he fattened it,” added the older ox.

The younger ox realised how sometimes what appears to be a sign of fortune may very well be the sign of misfortune.

(From the Buddha Jataka)





MAN-MADE MARVELS

THE GREATEST TUNNEL OF ALL TIME

A great mountain stood between France and Italy. Could the two countries be linked by a road?

For centuries the local name for Europe's highest peak, Mont Blanc, was the Accursed Mountain. Within its icy caverns, it was said, terrible winged dragons lurked in wait for unsuspecting travellers, while learned men asserted that its upper slopes were covered with glass instead of ice.

Even with the coming of the 20th century Mont Blanc could hardly be described as well loved. Men might not worry about lurking dragons any more, but there was no getting away from the fact that the seven-peaked, 4,825 metres high mass of rock was the most formidable part of the great alpine barrier separating Italy from the rest of Europe.

What was needed was a road tunnel through the mountains to connect France with Italy, but the political objections as well as the engineering problems

seemed to make such a project an impossible dream. That is, until the arrival on the scene of the wealthy Italian wool magnate, Count Dinto Totino.

The Bumble Bee!

It has been said that if the bumble bee knew anything about aeronautical engineering, it would not fly at all.

Count Totino's attitude to tunnelling was very much like the bumble bee's to flying. Visiting Mont Blanc in 1946, he decided that relations between the old wartime enemies, France and Italy, would be very much better if there was a means of easy communication between them.

A tunnel from Chamonix, on the French side of the mountain, to Courmayeur in Italy was envisaged by the Count. Had he been a tunnel engineer, he

would have been overawed by the size of the project. But happily he knew nothing whatever about tunnelling. Accordingly he called up a work force of his own mill workers and started work without delay.

Totino's planned tunnel was to be an unventilated passage that would carry 200 cars a day, the vehicles carefully spaced in order to avoid a build up of exhaust gases. By the end of the summer of 1946 his amateur tunnellers had penetrated 45 metres into the mountain. The Italian army was feeling uneasy. They feared that if the project proved successful the French army might come through!

It was decided that the matter should be referred to the Italian government.

It took seven years and most of Count Totino's private fortune before he had his way. In 1953, the politicians agreed that a Mont Blanc tunnel would be likely to result in increased trade rather than invasion. Another four years passed before the necessary agreements were all signed.

Work started on five kilometres of tunnelling through the solid heart of Mont Blanc, while on the other side of the frontier,

at Chamonix, French engineers faced a similar task. If all went well, it was planned that the two teams would eventually meet in the middle..

Under Professor Loris Corbi, head of the Italian team, drilling and blasting commenced. Soon the men were beyond the daylight, working by lamps clipped to their helmets.

Fresh air was pumped to them through a fat, red-painted pipe, while a similar pipe sucked the stale air out.

Anxiously the drillers studied the rock before them, hoping to find the safe, uncrumbling granite known as protogine rather than the treacherous soft rock called schist. They were unlucky, and found schist. They were to cope with its unpredictable collapses, floundering in the subterranean springs that leaked through it, for the best part of a year.

On the far side of the mountain, the French team consisted of 350 top tunnellers picked from the 10,000 who had applied for a job. Less conservative in their methods than the Italians, they soon came to the conclusion that it was wasteful to use squads of men digging with picks and drills. Instead they

would construct vast steel platforms that would move forward on rails, while rows of drillers operated simultaneously from three decks, one above the other. These drill-carriers, called Jumbos, were an immediate success and were soon in use by the Italians too.

It soon became obvious that it would be a race between France and Italy as to which tunnel would reach the halfway meeting point first. But however fast the tunnellers might want to move, they knew that

the mountain was always waiting for a moment's inattention, a false move that might enable it to claim a victim.

When the Italians finally reached hard protogine instead of shifting schist, they found that the granite had dangers of its own. The pressure of the mountain above them caused "rock bursts", when the face of the tunnel would suddenly explode and hurl razor sharp splinters of rock in all directions. Pockets of water could produce jets of terrible power.



Memorable Moment

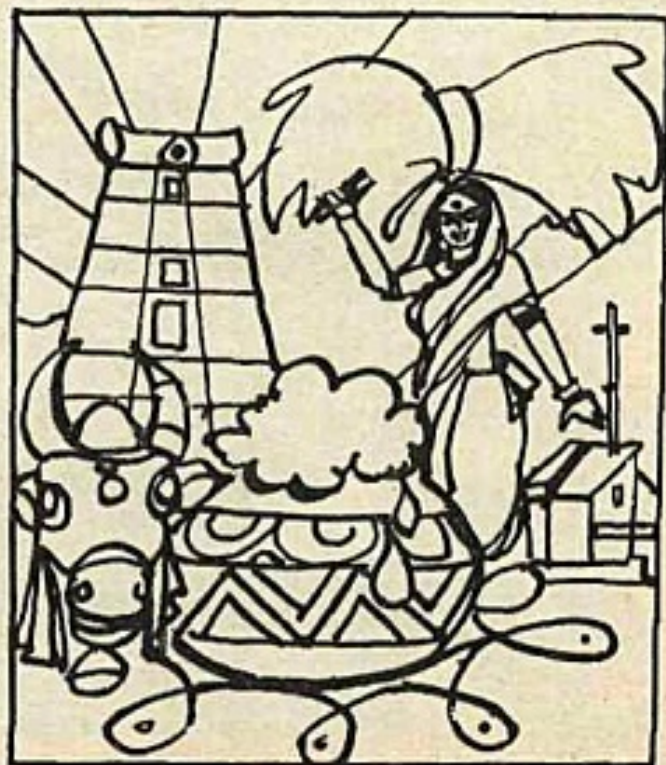
It was the Italian team who reached the halfway point first. Then, on 14th August, 1962, a blast of dynamite carried away the last few metres of granite that separated them from the French.

Workmen from the two countries threw themselves into each other's arms in a moment of triumph and emotion. It had taken nearly four years, £20 million, and the lives of 17 men to make the 11.6 kms roadway possible, and when Loris Lorbi of Italy went forward to meet Andre Borie, his fellow engineer

from France, both men must have been aware that they had achieved a man-made marvel, and perhaps the greatest tunnel of all time. A road link that today enables drivers to cross from France to Italy in 15 minutes, instead of the previous 16 hours by road above the ground.

Two thousand years ago a homesick Roman soldier chipped a prayer on a rock near Mont Blanc, imploring the Gods to "deliver me from this accursed spot and speed me back to Rome." Today—he could comfortably drive home and be back on duty again all in the course of a weekend!

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



THE PHILOSOPHER WHO LIVED IN A TUB

In the 4th century B. C. Greece saw a strange philosopher who chose to live in a tub—and that too in a market place. This he did to ridicule man's fondness for comfortable living. His name was Diogenes. in broad daylight he would go out with a lantern. To those curious, he would say, "I'm looking for at least one honest man!"

This famous Cynic once saw some Officials capturing a burglar. "The big burglars have caught a small one," was his comment.

Alexander the Great was so much fascinated by him that he said, "If I were not Alexander, I would wish to be Diogenes."



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THE WISE**

It is better that ten guilty persons. escape than one innocent suffer.

—**Sir William Blackstone**

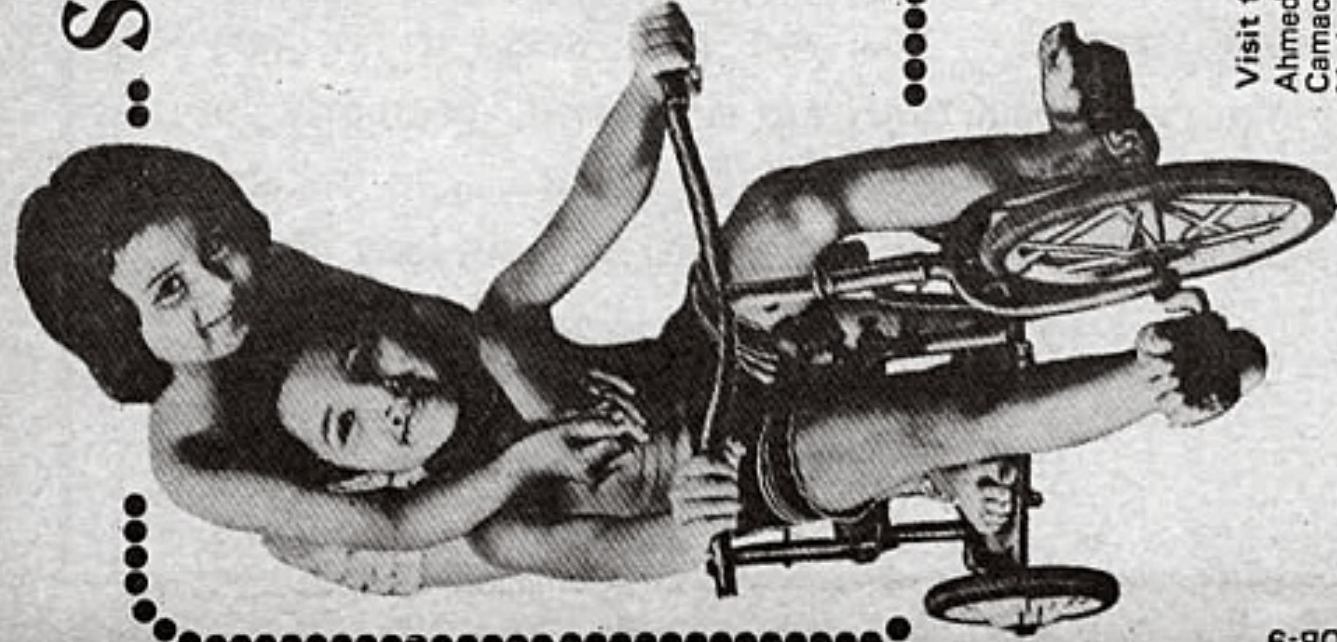
Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone,
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in your own.

—**Adam Lindsay Gordon**

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Nor iron bars a cage.

—**Richard Lovelace**

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